United Nations S/PV.6085

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6085th meeting

Thursday, 19 February 2009, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Takasu	(Japan)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Zhang Yesui
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Turkey	Mr. İlkin
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2009/72)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-24239 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2009/72)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Brazil, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Thailand and Timor-Leste, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I request the Protocol Officer to escort His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste, to a seat at the Council table.

Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I extend the warmest welcome to Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and head of Mission of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members have before them document S/2009/72, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

I wish to welcome the presence this morning of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We are very pleased that he has made time available for this meeting. I now have the honour of giving him the floor.

The Secretary-General: It gives me great pleasure to attend this Council meeting and to present my report (S/2009/72) on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). I am particularly pleased that President Ramos-Horta is with us this morning. At this time last year, we were all anxiously following the news of his medical condition in the wake of the tragic attacks of 11 February. His presence today, clearly in fine health and spirits, symbolizes the resilience of his young nation, which responded so maturely to that terrible event.

My report on UNMIT comes at a watershed moment for Timor-Leste. In 2007, order was re-established; the security situation was stabilized, peaceful elections were held and a smooth transfer of power took place. In 2008, the country took in its stride a small but serious challenge to its stability. It stuck to its immediate priorities. By the end of the year, remarkable progress had been made in addressing the residual problems of the 2006 crisis. The petitioners reached a settlement with the Government. The vast majority of internally displaced persons have returned to their communities without incident. I have the rare pleasure of being able to say to the Council that more progress has been achieved than had been anticipated in my last report (S/2008/501).

We begin 2009 with a clear horizon. The country can finally devote its undivided attention to the essential task of building the strong and durable foundations that are crucial for long-term stability and prosperity. That work will require the concerted efforts of all Timorese. I commend President Ramos-Horta for engaging all political actors and working to forge a unified effort on issues of important national interest.

One of the main priorities in the year ahead must be the development of the security sector. A major step

will be the gradual resumption of executive policing authority by the national police. UNMIT is working closely with the Government to plan a series of handovers based on agreed criteria. As the Timorese police begin that new phase of its development, United Nations police will remain fully in place to support, advise and intervene as necessary as a guarantor of security.

My report to the Council includes a set of benchmarks for measuring UNMIT's progress in achieving its mandate. I am keenly aware that a number of fundamental issues will require sustained, long-term attention well beyond the Mission's lifespan. In his last appearance before the Council, in 2007 as Prime Minister, President Ramos-Horta argued that a United Nations peacekeeping presence would be required until at least 2012, a date that now seems less distant than it did. Whatever the ultimate length of UNMIT's mandate proves to be, it is clear that bilateral partners, with the ongoing cooperation of the United Nations family, will have to ensure that long-term support. I urge them to do so, not least because, in areas such as police training and the development of military doctrine, bilateral expertise may be more effective than traditional United Nations means.

I am heartened to know that the mood of the country has become very positive. Government transfers to individuals have injected much-needed cash into the economy. Parliament has passed the budget, which projects considerable investment in infrastructure for the coming year. Indeed, the Government has designated 2009 as the year of infrastructure, to lay the foundations for Timor-Leste's future. Investing in infrastructure is crucial but, as we all know, infrastructure is not just a matter of roads, schools and power grids. It is equally a question of strengthening democratic governance and the rule of law. Without accountability, not only of the Government to its people but of the people to each other, there is no hope for a viable democratic State.

In that regard, I am pleased to note the productive tone and content of recent debates in Parliament, including the active and constructive role of the opposition, and of women in general. Prime Minister Gusmão, for his part, has shown laudable respect for the democratic process by personally presenting and defending his budget in front of Parliament every day for three full weeks.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Organization's full-time presence in Timor-Leste. Our partnership has become strong and close. President Ramos-Horta's presence here today exemplifies the ties that inseparably bind the United Nations and Timor-Leste. Just over a year ago, the members of the Council and I had the pleasure of visiting that brave new country and seeing Timor-Leste's progress for ourselves. With what we saw very much in mind, I have no doubt that the Council will take this opportunity to renew its collective commitment to Timor-Leste. For my part, I pledge the full support of the United Nations system in helping the Timorese people realize their hopes for security, stability and well-being.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General very much for his very important statement.

I now have the honour to give the floor to Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste.

President Ramos-Horta: Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor today; it is always a privilege to speak before this body, and in doing so I wish to reiterate my sincere gratitude, and that of the people of Timor-Leste, for the steady engagement of the United Nations in assisting us to overcome the inevitable and predictable setbacks and all of the natural challenges encountered in the process of nation-building and peace-consolidation.

I am honoured and touched by the presence of the Secretary-General, as it illustrates his strong commitment to the well-being of the people of Timor-Leste and his determined leadership in ensuring that we succeed.

I am pleased to be here in the company of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, who has earned the gratitude and respect of all of us — leaders and common people alike — because of his intimate knowledge of Timor-Leste, his integrity and his dedication. I wish also to commend the international and national staff of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), in particular the United Nations police (UNPOL), for their selfless dedication to our country and to the cause of peace.

Almost exactly one year ago, on 11 February 2008, I was on that dark frontier between life and death. At that time, doctors and nurses of the Aspen

Medical Centre in Dili were operating on me. Then I was flown to the Royal Darwin Hospital, where I was very well looked after. Almighty God decided to defer my departure from this Earth and guided the hands of the doctors and nurses who operated on me. Once again, to the devoted doctors and nurses in Dili and Darwin, my family and friends and the anonymous thousands around the world, leaders and common people, of all walks of life and of all ages — to all those who devoted countless hours to praying for me, in my own beloved country and elsewhere — I reiterate my eternal gratitude.

I wish also to reiterate my heartfelt gratitude to the Secretary-General for his personal interest and concern about my well-being, as well to the members of the Security Council for holding an emergency meeting following the 11 February attacks on me and the Prime Minister (see S/PV.5833).

I recall my appearance before this body on 5 May 2006 (see S/PV.5432) as my country began the descent towards renewed social unrest. I said then that Dili was a city on the edge and that fear was palpable. I appealed to the Council then to take decisive action to prevent the worst. Upon my return to Timor-Leste, I began intense efforts to bring about dialogue and an end to the tensions and to prevent the worst from happening. I met with all — and I emphasize all — East Timorese actors in my attempts to bridge the divide, and I regularly briefed the diplomatic community. A meeting involving all civilian and military leaders was to be held in the last week of May 2006. However, on 23 and 25 May 2006, separate but related violent incidents occurred, compromising my efforts.

As the security situation deteriorated at the end of May 2006, the East Timorese political and military leadership decided to put aside our pride and appeal to friends to assist us immediately. Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Portugal responded positively. Their prompt response and the expeditious deployment of troops with credible force and equipment can be classified today as a remarkable success and as having set a new precedent in peace-enforcement history.

In August 2006, the Security Council established UNMIT, equipped with a robust police component but without a peacekeeping force with airborne and extraction capabilities. As Malaysian and Portuguese formed police units integrated with the new UNPOL, we negotiated with Australia, New Zealand and the United Nations a unique trilateral arrangement that remains in force today and has proved to be extremely effective.

I wish to register my appreciation for the forthcoming decision of the Council to extend UNMIT's mandate until February 2010, as contained in the draft resolution that the Council will be considering. In my view, the International Stabilization Force that comprises contingents from Australia and New Zealand should continue its mandate in tandem with that of UNMIT.

I am here today amid a very different, more positive and promising scenario. In mid-2006, our country was sucked into the most serious challenge and the greatest danger seen since 2002. As a result, our vulnerable economy, which had shown signs of recovery in 2005, contracted into negative growth. But as the crisis eased by the end of 2006, 2007 saw some robust recovery, with non-oil gross domestic product estimated to have grown 8 per cent in real terms.

Today, Timor-Leste is at peace. The most recent report on the situation in Timor-Leste by International Crisis Group concluded that "security in Timor-Leste is strikingly improved. Armed groups are no longer at large. The atmosphere in the streets of Dili is far less tense". Incidents ranging from assault to homicide have significantly declined since 2007; they are less frequent than in previous years and even less frequent than in some more established democracies. For instance, a United Nations compilation of data comparing incidents of assault reveals that in 2008 there were 169.1 assaults per 100,000 people in Timor-Leste, while there were 796 cases recorded in two major industrialized countries. During the same period, there were 3.2 homicides per 100,000 people in Timor-Leste and 5.6 in a major industrialized country.

Our economy is doing very well, exhibiting real growth of more than 10 per cent at the end of 2008. With a 2009 budget of $680 million and $200 million in donor programmes, I believe we will be able to maintain double-digit growth in spite of the international financial crisis. Why and how do I make such an optimistic prognosis for our economy in 2009? We are an importing nation, importing cement, steel and basic foodstuffs like rice. While our petroleum revenues will be significantly reduced, so will our import bill as commodity prices fall. We have strong liquidity — more

than $4 billion — in our Petroleum Fund, which can be drawn upon to support continued investment in strategic sectors of the economy and thus to fuel economic growth and relative wealth. Apart from our continued firm commitment to investing in education and health, the 2009 budget shows that the total amounts allocated to agriculture and infrastructure — $34 million and $130 million, respectively — have increased substantially compared to previous years.

The food crisis of 2007 and 2008 was a wake-up call for all of us. In a number of comments then, I said that we must not always react to crises with fear and despair but that we must rather seize them as opportunities. In Timor-Leste, the food crisis prompted the Government to refocus attention on the agricultural sector, increasing investment in the provision of high-yield seeds, tractors and hand tractors, enabling farmers to learn new farming techniques and expanding food production. As a further incentive, the Government purchases locally produced, non-perishable produce, such as rice, corn and beans, above international market prices. The purchased items are redistributed to hospitals, schools and vulnerable groups. As a result of timely and proactive Government intervention, Timor-Leste was able to avoid social unrest and instability and the further deterioration of the livelihood of the poor.

In the 2009 budget, $205 million was allocated for major capital development projects, including the building of a new national electricity project to provide reliable and cheap electricity to the whole country within two or three years. This is a heavy-fuel-based power plant with new transmission lines that can be switched to gas and wind power. However, we believe that, even if we are able to operate with gas and wind energy, Timor-Leste will continue to need supplemental support in the form of heavy-fuel-based energy. There will be strict monitoring to ensure that the project will be in full compliance with World Bank environmental standards and the Kyoto Protocol. An international tender will be announced shortly for an independent consultant to oversee the implementation of the project in all its technical aspects as well as in terms of environmental impact.

Over the next 10 years, the Government will have to mobilize approximately $5 billion, inter alia to build a new international airport, estimated to cost $700 million; a new port, estimated to cost $300 million; and a modern, first-class network of national and rural roads, estimated to cost between $1 billion and $2 billion.

There are no short cuts to development and modernization, and there are no miracles. I have told my good friend Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão: Be audacious, courageous, decisive and take risks, and you will be remembered as a Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore or a Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia — leaders of vision and courage who have transformed the conditions in their countries from conflict and poverty into peace and prosperity in one generation. I added: Or you will be remembered as a small shopkeeper-owner if you are not courageous enough to invest aggressively in the next few years.

As the Secretary-General notes in his report (S/2009/72), the events of 11 February 2008 have resulted in a kind of watershed; we have turned the corner. Let me share some facts with the Council.

With regard to internally displaced persons, the visible calm and feeling of security in the country have permitted the Government's ongoing success with the national recovery strategy. Fifty-eight of the 60 camps that were open in 2006-2007 have now closed. There are few camps remaining in Dili, which the Ministry of Social Solidarity is working to have closed within the first few months of 2009. The Ministry, with the assistance of the United Nations, is continuing to address the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the receiving communities, as well as monitoring the situation in receiving communities to ensure that any problems that may arise as a result of the relocation will be addressed in an appropriate manner.

The Government, led by Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, has, in one year, managed to resolve many of the outstanding problems inherited from the 2006 crisis. Within approximately a year and a half, the situations related to IDPs, petitioners, pensions for the elderly, vulnerable persons and former combatants of the national liberation movement were resolved.

Security sector reform and the further development of our national police and defence forces have been my main concerns, and I have made them priorities of my presidency. That commitment had already been demonstrated when I took office as Prime Minister in the midst of the 2006 crisis. Speaking then before our national parliament, I defined my role as that of an army chaplain and pledged to heal the

wounds of the country's heart and soul and not to buy more weapons. I made it a priority to heal the wounds within our police and defence forces, between the two institutions and between them and the people. I was aware then — and remain aware — that only a healthy relationship of trust between the two security institutions can ensure that the 2006 crisis will not recur. I have continued that effort as President, in partnership with the Speaker of our national parliament and with our Prime Minister, and I believe we have achieved much since.

Today, we can say with a degree of confidence that many of the divisions within the two institutions have been resolved. That does not imply that all the weaknesses and failings have been overcome. We still have a long way to go in professionalizing and modernizing the two security forces, but I believe we can achieve our most ambitious goals by 2012.

In line with the Government's view that "the rebuilding of the national police is a long undertaking, requiring national ownership and continued international assistance", key developments in the area of security sector reform have focused on greater consultation and participation. With the assistance of UNMIT, and following the signing of the Security Sector Review project between the United Nations and the Government of Timor-Leste, the Government will undertake a comprehensive review of the security sector.

A number of activities were undertaken last year to support the strengthening of national institutions. In September 2008, representatives of a broad spectrum of Timorese society, police and military personnel, parliamentarians and Government officials met, in a Government-initiated process to develop the national security policy, at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu.

In an effort to canvass a broader range of opinions and views, a nationwide survey is being conducted on perceptions of security threats and of the security sector in general. In December 2008, the Prime Minister and I, with full support from UNMIT, co-hosted a security sector reform and development seminar. The seminar brought together a range of diverse national and international actors to discuss topics such as national security legislation and policy and was an important step in developing a consensus vision on what Timor-Leste would like to achieve in the security sector. Key legislation, such as the national security law, the national defence law and the internal security law, has been drafted.

The resumption of policing responsibilities by the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) from UNMIT has sparked a call from PNTL officers — ever conscious of their need to be prepared for the eventual full assumption of policing responsibilities from the United Nations police — for greater training and logistical support. The establishment of assessment teams, the handover of districts and the terms of reference for a joint technical team that will monitor the transition process are currently being finalized.

With regard to handover in the districts, decisions will be based on the meeting of four criteria: the ability of the PNTL to respond appropriately to the security environment in a given district; final certification of at least 80 per cent of eligible PNTL officers in a given district or unit to be handed over; the availability of initial operational logistical requirements; and institutional stability.

The PNTL and the Secretary of State for Security, together with UNMIT, are finalizing the indicators that will be used to assess the overall criteria. We are also discussing the work of joint assessment teams that will determine whether a district or unit has met the criteria. The handover itself will be of vital importance as a confidence-building exercise for officers of the PNTL, but the Government also realizes that the handover is only one stage in the development of a mature, professional, disciplined and neutral police force with due regard for human rights and the rule of law.

I now turn to the justice sector. In 2008, a number of key challenges faced that sector, including insufficient capacity, issues regarding the composition of the Court of Appeal and insufficiently robust institutions. However, despite those challenges, there were some significant accomplishments. The drafting and review of important legislation for the development of the legal framework in Timor-Leste was completed. Draft laws regarding witness protection, juveniles, the establishment of an anti-corruption commission, domestic violence and the criminal code are now before the Council of Ministers for review and adoption.

Efforts have been made to enhance cooperation between the prosecution and the police. That

cooperation has concerned the serving of notifications, the long-awaited transfer of prosecution files to their respective jurisdictions in two districts — Baucau and Oecussi — and the consideration of an overall case management system that will, it is hoped, result in a significant increase in the number of criminal cases processed. A strategy has also been formulated for further reform of the corrections service.

As regards the fight against poverty, the recent Timor-Leste survey of living standards conducted by the National Statistics Directorate and analysed by the World Bank has revealed that the incidence of poverty increased significantly between 2001 and 2006, from 36.3 per cent to 49.9 per cent. As a result of the decline in the non-oil economy in per capita terms, real non-oil gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 12 per cent in that period, despite the increase in Timor-Leste's oil revenues.

The next survey will reveal the impact of the Government policies currently being implemented. However, with increased Government expenditures since the last quarter of 2007, non-oil GDP has increased dramatically, which will reverse the decline in per capita terms as shown in the Timor-Leste survey of living standards and hence should begin to reduce poverty levels.

While poverty levels seem to have increased in the years 2001 to 2006, I believe that Timor-Leste will remain on target to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 if the Government and our development partners continue to work hand in hand to enhance support for rural development, job creation, public health and education. Other highlights from the 2009 budget include vital social programmes to reduce poverty via $96 million in transfers for pensions to support veterans, the elderly and the disabled.

In conclusion, what Council members have heard from me are the natural and inevitable challenges facing most developing countries, and in particular post-conflict communities. Nation-building and peace-consolidation are lengthy processes that require the patience and steady commitment of all. In August this year, we will mark the tenth anniversary of the Popular Consultation that not only brought about our freedom but that also saw the complete devastation of our country and the resulting staggering human toll.

In the past 10 years, with assistance from the United Nations and our friends, we began the painful process of healing hearts and souls, building bridges of reconciliation among the fractured East Timorese communities, building infrastructure and institutions, creating an economy and building bridges with our neighbours. Nation-building and peacebuilding require vision and long-term, steady commitment. That is true for my country and is equally true for Haiti, Palestine, Somalia, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries. The list is a very long one. The challenges are always overwhelming and could discourage the weak and the impatient. Only the few who dare to dream and act on their dreams of an ideal abode for all human beings will see the fruit of their dreams.

On my part, I will do my best to relieve the burden of the international community and not to betray its trust, as it has been too patient and generous. I will do my best not to fail our people and not to betray their trust.

For those who are quick to make simplistic and sweeping judgements about the perceived failures of the United Nations, I am here to testify that we East Timorese owe the United Nations our very existence. A recent nationwide survey of people's perceptions conducted by the International Republican Institute found the following: UNMIT has an approval rate in Timor-Leste of 75 per cent; the Government has an approval rate of 66 per cent. It seems that UNMIT has performed better than our Government. The Prime Minister did better than the rest of the Government — without offence to the Minister for Foreign Affairs sitting behind me — receiving a 79 per cent approval rating. The National Police Force of Timor-Leste received an 80 per cent approval rating. That is most surprising in view of the fact that, in 2006-2007, the popularity of our police force was probably zero.

This shows the achievements we all have made and the results of the commitment of the Secretary-General and of the Security Council. Our defence force, which also had a low rating for respect following the 2006 crisis, today has an approval rating of 78 per cent. I will not share with the Council my disapproval rating, because it was embarrassingly low. And for those in the media and pseudo-academics with a penchant for inserting clichés like "failing State" into their sanctimonious lectures on my country and several others, I can only say, admittedly with poorly disguised disdain, that we are doing very well, thank you. May God the almighty and the merciful bless us all.

The President: I thank President Ramos-Horta for an inspiring statement. The Council thanks him for his notice that the United Nations has upheld such a high standing and is very grateful for that.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statement to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations that will take the floor with a lengthy statement are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): Let me at the outset express our gratitude for the presence of President Ramos-Horta. We are pleased to see him in the Council today and thank him for his impressive and, at the same time, candid statement. We are also particularly grateful for the presence of the Secretary-General and for his comprehensive and informative briefing on an issue on which the United Nations has truly been able to make a difference.

Let me also say that Austria fully aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered later in the day by the representative of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union.

My country is proud that we were able to make a contribution along Timor-Leste's way to independence. Burg Schlaining and Krumbach Castle were the venues of the Intra-East Timorese dialogue under the patronage of Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 1995 and 1998, which resulted in the Burg Schlaining Declaration. President Ramos-Horta and Bishop Belo were amongst our esteemed guests at the time.

Looking at present developments, we welcome the significant progress made in addressing the consequences of the 2006 crisis, in particular the reintegration of the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste petitioners into civilian life and the accelerated return of internally displaced persons (IDPs), which allowed for the majority of IDP camps to be closed. We therefore also support the recommendations of Walter Kälin, Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights for Internally Displaced Persons, on the sustainability of returns and durable solutions, and acknowledge the Government's five-pillar National Recovery Strategy as an important step in that direction.

We would like to congratulate the Government of Timor-Leste on those encouraging developments, which have unfolded in a remarkably smooth manner and without major violent incidents, and we thank the United Nations and the international security forces for their important contributions. In particular, we wish to acknowledge the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) police, working together with the national police force, in stabilizing the security situation.

Austria welcomes progress made in preparing for the resumption of policing responsibilities by national structures. On that point, we are in full agreement with the Secretary-General that a phased approach should be pursued, based in particular on the agreed criteria set out in his report. We are pleased to note that adherence to human rights standards will be one of the factors in measuring the readiness of districts and units to resume policing functions. Sustainable success in that field requires a broad approach that also entails the effective strengthening of the rule of law.

Let me say that the Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste has been one of the most active participants in the work of the friends of the rule of law, here at Headquarters in New York, and we are therefore not surprised that, for the Government of Timor-Leste, the rule of law is also a key priority. It is clear that we support the Government of Timor-Leste in its reform efforts and the Secretary-General's recommendation to accomplish an independent needs assessment of the judicial sector to allow for a coordinated approach in justice sector reform. We share the concern of UNMIT over the high levels of sexual and gender-based violence, which is one of the major public security problems. We hope that the National Parliament will soon enact the legislation necessary to ensure the protection of and support for victims, as well as accountability for perpetrators.

We are also encouraged to hear that allegations of ill treatment and human rights violations during arrests have substantially decreased following the disbanding of the Joint Command. It is important that members of the security forces be brought to justice for human rights violations documented by UNMIT during states of exception and that those responsible for criminal acts and human rights violations during the 2006 crisis be held accountable, as recommended by the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry. We support the authorities in Timor-Leste in their efforts to

build strong institutions to fight impunity for grave human rights violations.

Finally, in order to achieve long-term stability, review and reform of the security sector remain of utmost importance. In this context, let me place particular emphasis on the need for a clear definition of the army's role in peacetime, the clarification of the relationship between the army and the police, as well as internal accountability mechanisms and civil oversight.

We welcome the fact that UNMIT is already integrating peacebuilding aspects and thus helping to bridge a potential gap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding as the country moves forward. In order to gradually strengthen a peacebuilding approach to resolving the remaining issues, we would encourage Timor-Leste to consider starting cooperation with the Peacebuilding Fund in the near future.

In closing, Austria wishes to acknowledge the important role that UNMIT continues to play and to express support for the extension of its mandate for another 12 months. We thank UNMIT and the Government of Timor-Leste for the elaboration of the medium-term strategy. In our view, the achievements that have been made during these last years of close cooperation between UNMIT and the Government of Timor-Leste represent a success story, and lessons should drawn from them and applied in other comparable places.

Mr. Jurica (Croatia): We deeply appreciate His Excellency President José Ramos-Horta's personal participation in and contribution to today's debate. I thank him for his update on the situation in Timor-Leste. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his views on the situation in Timor-Leste as well.

Croatia aligns itself with the European Union statement to be delivered later in this open debate by the Czech presidency of the Union.

The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) is playing a vital role in restoring and maintaining stability, as well as in the crucial areas of democratic governance, socio-economic development, rule of law and security sector reform in Timor-Leste. We also recognize the significant contribution the international security forces made in 2008 towards maintaining stability in the area.

We are encouraged by the Secretariat's assessment of the political and security situation in Timor-Leste since the 2006 crisis and the return to normalcy following the events of 11 February 2008. While this progress confirms that a positive momentum has been established, its fragility should not be underestimated. Although Croatia was relieved to see that there were no further significant security incidents in 2008, the assassination attempts last year still serve as a stark reminder of the importance of addressing the unresolved root causes of the 2006 crisis and the multifaceted challenges still facing Timor-Leste. These challenges include strengthening political dialogue and reconciliation, consolidating peace, democracy and the rule of law, and achieving durable social and economic development.

On the issue of political dialogue, UNMIT has proved to be a valuable conduit for fostering a more inclusive and participatory consultative process at all levels of society in order to address critical political and security-related issues facing the country. We welcome the ongoing good office efforts of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Khare to promote an enhanced dialogue between the main stakeholders, including through the expanded High-level Coordination Committee and the Trilateral Coordination Forum. We also commend President Ramos-Horta for his role in creating opportunities to reinforce these and other consultative approaches with the opposition on questions of national interest. These practices can only help to build much-needed trust among the political leaders and allow the opposition a constructive role as set out in the political party accord signed on 25 May 2007.

The upcoming local elections in 2009 will serve as another important benchmark in the country's progress towards a culture of political dialogue and democratic governance. We hope that the Timorese will continue to take full advantage of the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNMIT's expertise in order to further build on the positive momentum achieved to date.

The ongoing review and reform of the security sector is of paramount concern. Fully cognizant of the long-term commitment that this comprehensive process entails, we appreciate the central role that UNMIT is playing to further strengthen institutional capacities, policies and processes. To ensure that the security sector will act in a professional, impartial manner and

with due respect for human rights, a clear distinction of roles between the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) security force and the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) is needed, coupled with a strong legal framework and shored up by civil oversight, the rule of law, transparency and accountability mechanisms for both security institutions.

Fully developed and effective national capacities are essential for the consolidation of future peacebuilding efforts in Timor-Leste. The long-term consolidation of peace in Timor-Leste cannot take place in the absence of a viable environment for a credible and functioning judiciary and penal system in which the rule of law prevails, impunity is fully overcome and perpetrators of the serious criminal offences committed in 1999 and 2006 are brought to justice. Timorese recognition of the need for justice and commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry is a very encouraging sign.

We warmly welcome the resolve of the Government to address two major residual consequences of the 2006 crisis, namely, the issues of the F-FDTL petitioners and of the internally displaced persons. The onus now lies with the Government to ensure the sustainability of returns by providing a secure and stable environment and by establishing legal, social and economic frameworks that will allow for their reconciliation and reintegration into society.

Perhaps more focus could now be given to peacebuilding efforts aimed at social inclusion and cohesion for all Timorese people through their employment and empowerment in an inclusive and sustainable economy. These efforts could produce vital opportunities for the Timorese people to support themselves and develop more productive livelihoods given the serious social and economic challenges the country faces in trying to alleviate poverty and meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Finally, Croatia supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the UNMIT mandate for a further 12 months at the current level. We believe that the Mission's presence is necessary to enable the Timorese leadership to effectively address the outstanding challenges to the peace consolidation process, ensuring a solid foundation upon which a Timorese-led peacebuilding process can be built in the future.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like first to welcome the presence here of President Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Prize laureate. It is an honour for us to welcome him here this morning and to express our admiration for him. Together with Prime Minister Gusmão, he has for decades been the incarnation of the hopes and aspirations of an entire people to independence, and for several years now, the capacity of that same people to rally to build a peaceful and democratic future.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing on the situation in Timor-Leste. His presence attests to the particular importance that the United Nations attaches to that country, which it has closely and most successfully accompanied in its emergence on the international scene for some 10 years. Here, we must also hail the particularly effective work conducted in the field by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team.

The Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic make a statement on behalf of the European Union with which France fully associates itself. For my part, I would like to make a few very brief observations.

A year ago, we met here in the tragic context of the attacks on the Head of State and the Prime Minister, designed to destabilize the country. In contrast to what happened in the spring of 2006, these events did not endanger the recovery efforts. Progress that we could barely have hoped for a year ago has in fact been accomplished, in particular on the economic level and in security sector reform, as broadly outlined in President Ramos-Horta's statement. The unity of the people of Timor-Leste, attested to by the remarkable figures cited, their solidarity with the Government and its high regard for the international cooperation are particularly remarkable because Timor-Leste owes its success above to the Timorese people and officials themselves.

However, they would not have been possible without the commitment of the international community. Once again, I pay tribute to the vigorous activities of Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, and welcome the very positive role played by the neighbouring countries, in particular Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Portugal, among others that the President referred to, whose support to the Timorese authorities helped to preserve stability in the country.

France, for its part, will continue to support the efforts of Timor-Leste and the international community for the development and stability of the country. In particular, we are participating, in coordination with the United Nations, in the training of the Timorese civil guard, which, as President Ramos-Horta said, is a high priority for the Government.

I recall once again the importance of judicial reform and the fight against impunity for past crimes, which are prerequisites of lasting reconciliation. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the activities of UNMIT in supporting Timor-Leste's Prosecutor-General, which are fully within the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

Consolidating the progress achieved over the past few months will take time. The reassuring presence of UNMIT and of international security forces will be crucial to stability during that period of reconciliation. Therefore, France supports renewing the Mission's mandate for a period of 12 months. But that should be part of a medium-term peacebuilding strategy with the assistance of the United Nations, to ensure the gradual assumption of ownership by the Timorese people of the tasks undertaken today by the United Nations operation.

Thus, we can realize the wish of the Security Council to develop better-targeted, and thus more effective, operations. Once again, Timor-Leste can be a laboratory of ideas and, as President Ramos-Horta himself underscored, can prove that the United Nations also knows how to excel.

Mr. Zhang Yesui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the presence of President Ramos-Horta at this debate of the Security Council. We thank him for his important speech and also the Secretary-General for his very comprehensive report on the situation in Timor-Leste.

We are pleased to note that, following the attacks of February 2008, under the leadership of President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão calm quickly returned to the country. The settlement of the issues of the petitioners and the internally displaced persons resulted in political dialogue among the different factions of the country further intensified.

The history of the past two years in Timor-Leste has shown that only full cooperation among the various political forces, and in particular between the Government and Frente Revolucionária do East Timor Independente, has made it possible to effectively resolve the security issue. We hail the efforts of President Ramos-Horta for national reconciliation. We call on all the parties in Timor-Leste to take into consideration the stability of the country and the interests of the people, take advantage of the present situation, which is conducive to peace and development, avoid futile controversy and focus on the process of peace and the reconstruction of the country.

Achieving peace and lasting stability in Timor-Leste requires significant efforts to further develop the economy and improve living conditions in the country. In the existing circumstances, we support the Government's action in giving priority to developing infrastructure, rural development and human resource capacity-development, in particular for young people, with a view to eliminating factors for instability from the outset.

The international community should also continue to do its utmost to step up the peace process in Timor-Leste. We hope that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, signed last year between the Government and the United Nations, will be effectively put into practice. As part of its peacekeeping tasks, UNMIT should also assist the Government of Timor-Leste in strengthening its capacity for independent governance.

From the very beginning, the history of independence and development in Timor-Leste has been closed linked to the United Nations so as to ensure that Timor-Leste is on the path to success. The United Nations therefore bears a clear responsibility. We support the extension of UNMIT's mandate. In continuing its peacekeeping operations, the police component of UNMIT must guarantee public security and redouble efforts to help the Timor-Leste police in strengthening its law enforcement capacity. In the future, United Nations police should give priority to training and transferring experience to the Timor-Leste police. After a comprehensive review of the division of resources and work of the United Nations, the staffing of UNMIT needs restructuring.

China and Timor-Leste are both members of the great family of nations of a peaceful Asia. We attach great importance to the development of the situation in Timor-Leste. We hope that Timor-Leste will achieve development beneficial to the people and their

happiness as quickly as possible. In so far as possible, China will continue to provide assistance to Timor-Leste.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I thank you, Sir, for convening this debate of the Council on Timor-Leste. I welcome President José Ramos Horta of Timor-Leste to the Council and thank him for his very important statement. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his presence and for his report (S/2009/72), which covers all key aspects of the situation in Timor-Leste over the past six months.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General's assessment that the reporting period marked an important stage in Timor-Leste's return to normalcy following the events of 11 February 2008, and congratulates the people and Government of Timor-Leste on their success in maintaining national security and stability and in keeping the peace process on track amid numerous difficulties. While taking note of the increased poverty as a long-term challenge, demanding even stronger determination and more effective combined synergy, we highly appreciate the efforts made by the Government of Timor-Leste to address post-conflict issues, particularly those related to the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the closure of 54 out of 63 IDP camps in Dili and Bacau; to strengthen national reconciliation by creating opportunities for all stakeholders to contribute to solving issues of national interest; and to work in close consultation with the United Nations, local partners and the public to enhance its capacities and implement socio-economic development programmes.

We commend the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for the activities conducted within its mandate in helping to preserve peace, sustain stability and promote development in the country, especially those activities aimed at enhancing Timor-Leste's institutional capacities by training staff, increasing citizen participation, and strengthening parliamentary oversight functions and security sector reform, as requested by the Government of Timor-Leste.

We are encouraged by the broad agreement that the Government and UNMIT have reached on the assumption, from this year, by the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) of policing responsibilities in line with the Policing Arrangement. We share the expectation that, with support from UNMIT, the PNTL will be able, step by step, to take over its security responsibilities.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's medium-term strategy and benchmarks, which incorporate national priorities and other planning exercises such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, to help measure and track progress in key areas, particularly improvement in quality of life and employment opportunities for youth in rural areas, thereby addressing the country's underlying challenges.

In view of the need for the long-term stability of Timor-Leste, we support the Secretary-General's request to extend UNMIT's mandate for another 12 months at its current composition and strength. We encourage UNMIT to make full use of its mandate to continue working closely with the Government of Timor-Leste and with other United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Development Programme, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to effectively implement security and development programmes in Timor-Leste.

Now that the peace and development process is in the hands of the people of Timor-Leste, the country's long-term security and stability depend on the determination and the efforts of the Government and all sectors of the population to move the current process forward. We call upon all parties concerned in Timor-Leste to actively participate in the ongoing dialogue and to contribute to meeting the country's challenges, first and foremost those relating to ensuring the success of the local elections to be held this year.

Viet Nam has been and will remain by the side of the people and the Government of Timor-Leste on their path towards lasting peace and sustainable development. We are prepared to share post-conflict development experiences with Timor-Leste and to enhance bilateral cooperation in fields where Viet Nam has comparative advantages.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. President, for your initiative to convene this open Security Council debate to consider the work of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). There is no doubt that the progress

made in Timor-Leste constitutes a positive example that serves to encourage the Security Council and the entire Organization in their efforts.

My delegation is pleased to welcome President José Ramos-Horta and to congratulate him on the important strides made in his country towards building a democratic system, and on having ensured security and institutional capacity following the February 2008 attacks against him and Prime Minister Gusmão.

We also welcome the support provided by neighbouring States and the international community as a whole.

Further, we welcome the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Atul Khare, and we thank them for the report before the Council in document S/2009/72, which offers a clear overview of the work of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste and of the challenges and priorities that still lie ahead.

While the Government of Timor-Leste has made progress in strengthening post-conflict stability, UNMIT is playing a crucial role in maintaining security, fostering development and strengthening institutions, and it must continue to provide support to the country in its endeavours in those areas. Here, we note with interest the Secretary-General's comments in his report with respect to the country's urgent needs, such as security sector reform, strengthening the justice system, respect for human rights and improved machinery for transparency and accountability in the government sector.

That is why we support UNMIT's efforts to address outstanding tasks such as security sector reform, strengthening the rule of law, ensuring economic and social development, promoting a culture of democratic governance and bringing about the successful return and resettlement of internally displaced persons.

Pending issues requiring renewed efforts include the training of police officers, lawyers and judges, and the establishment of legal mechanisms to resolve civil disputes, including those related to property rights, with a view to strengthening the rule of law and making the system more efficient. That is why Mexico welcomes the current process of transferring command to enable the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste to assume responsibility for police work that until now has been undertaken by UNMIT. We also welcome the signing of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2009-2013 by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and the Prime Minister, in order to promote democratization and social cohesion, poverty reduction and basic social services. We hope that the programme will make it possible to tackle the major challenge posed by unemployment and to fight poverty in Timor-Leste.

My delegation is concerned about the trafficking in persons for purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour and agricultural work. While we acknowledge the progress the Government has made in establishing offices for the protection of minors, we call upon it to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We also urge the Government to cooperate closely with the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry in order to address the continuing impunity for crimes committed during the 2006 crisis, in conformity with resolution 1802 (2008).

We also welcome efforts made to facilitate the return of the country's remaining internally displaced persons, and we express our hope that the Government will put in place the mechanisms necessary to ensure that those persons are socially and economically integrated into their communities in an atmosphere of calm and reconciliation.

Mexico hails the level of coordination achieved between the Government of Timor-Leste and the various United Nations bodies and agencies, in particular the joint activities of the United Nations Development Programme and UNMIT and the establishment of a support team to strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Electoral Commission with a view to the municipal and mayoral elections to be held this year.

Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute will work with the Timor-Leste authorities in that electoral process through a capacity-building programme in the areas of training for municipal officers, electoral training, electoral information campaigns for civil society and the media, and the voter registry.

Finally, I reaffirm my country's commitment to maintaining security, strengthening institutions and

protecting human rights in Timor-Leste, as has been the case from the outset of the process of self-determination and independence.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I join previous speakers in welcoming President José Ramos-Horta and in thanking him for his personal participation in our debate today with a detailed and candid presentation on the situation in his country. I wish also to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2008/72) and his valuable remarks.

My country welcomes the fact that the situation in Timor-Leste — in particular the security situation — has stabilized since the incidents of February 2008. We commend the progress made in addressing the two residual consequences of the 2006 crisis — the petitioners and the internally displaced persons. We hope that these efforts will continue with a view to achieving lasting peace.

We also welcome the agreement between the Government of Timor-Leste and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) on the resumption of policing responsibilities by the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) in mid-2009, in accordance with the criteria agreed by the two parties in 2008. This development will lay the foundation for the long-term development of the PNTL. In that connection, we share the views expressed by the Secretary-General on the need to agree on a detailed and binding document defining the specific roles of UNMIT police and the depth of the UNMIT-national police engagement in this next phase, which must be agreed and in place prior to the start of the handover process. UNMIT should also continue its monitoring and advisory role. In that regard, we welcome the Government's agreement to a medium-term strategy and terms of reference and support the Secretary-General's proposal to maintain the current size of the police mission.

Despite the achievements, we share the Secretary-General's opinion that "inflammatory rhetoric between some leaders has a negative impact on all of society, hardening positions and increasing tensions between followers" (*S/2009/72, para. 8*). We therefore call on all parties to pursue constructive political dialogue in the interests of their country. In that connection, we welcome the memorandum of understanding signed by the Office of the President on 19 November to achieve consensus on issues of national importance and priority. We also commend the efforts of President Ramos-Horta and his perseverance in maintaining good relations with all local actors.

It is important to continue supporting and improving the institutions of Timor-Leste, building their capacities to assume their full responsibilities for socio-economic and security conditions, respect for the rule of law, human rights and the fight against impunity, and to pursue a comprehensive approach to identifying the external and internal responsibilities and roles of the national police and the armed forces. That will help to strengthen legal frameworks and civilian oversight through constructive political dialogue and respect for State institutions.

In conclusion, we support the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report, particularly those in response to the request of the Timorese Government for logistical support and assistance for the local elections to be held this year, which we hope will be crowned by success. We also support the efforts of Special Representative Atul Khare and the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the mandate of UNMIT be extended to February 2010.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): I join other speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his statement to the Council this morning. I also wish to welcome to the Council the Président of Timor-Leste and thank him for his comprehensive address.

The comments of the Secretary-General as well as those of President Ramos-Horta point to two important facts: the fact that steady progress is being made in Timor-Leste but that a lot more remains to be done, and the fact that the unwavering support of the international community, particularly the United Nations, is still necessary. While we have to do more, we have to consolidate the success achieved so far.

We are pleased to note that progress has been made in the most critical aspects that will speed up self-governance and administration in Timor-Leste, especially the continued stabilization of the security situation. There is no doubt that the completion of security sector reform will be an important springboard for the long-term stability and socio-economic development of Timor-Leste.

We particularly welcome the success achieved in the area of national dialogue and reconciliation. It is

encouraging to note that the issue of internal displacement has been addressed with the priority it deserves, leading to the accelerated return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their homes, and without incidents affecting their reintegration. We are happy to note that the remaining IDP camps will be closed soon. Uganda, as a country in the process of resettling IDPs and reconstructing the northern part of the country after the brutal insurgency of the Lord's Resistance Army, attaches great importance to the issue of resettling IDPs so that they can lead normal and productive lives.

Uganda appreciates the personal interest in and commitment of President Ramos-Horta to establishing a framework for dialogue. The signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Office of the President and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, with a view to establishing a formal dialogue process for achieving consensus on important national matters, is an important cornerstone of the future stability of the country.

We believe that real stability in the country will not be realized until there is meaningful progress in the law and order sector, with the Government and people of Timor-Leste assuming full law enforcement responsibilities. In this regard, every effort should be made to speed up the capacity development and empowerment of the Timorese police, as well as its institutional capacity to undertake this responsibility. We note that benchmarks have been agreed upon for the gradual transfer of policing activities to the Timorese National Police. We hope that, with continued support from the international community, these benchmarks will be achieved in timely manner.

The completion of the development of the medium-term strategy and its benchmarks is a very welcome development. The execution of the strategy will require the commitment of all parties involved, including the international community. We welcome the active participation of Timorese authorities in its development, and trust that it will receive the support of all the parties and people of Timor-Leste.

In conclusion, Uganda is convinced that the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend UNMIT's mandate for a further 12 months, at the current composition and strength, is a reasonable one. Uganda is ready to support it.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I am particularly pleased that we are joined today by President José Ramos-Horta. We very much welcome his very thoughtful and comprehensive statement to the Council. We also appreciate the Secretary-General's presence and his comprehensive statement.

We are very heartened to see the progress that has been made over the past year, in particular in the wake of the bloodshed of 2006 and last year's attempts on the lives of both President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão. The people of Timor-Leste and their leaders have shown great courage as they strive to bring peace and stability to their country. We also commend the Secretary-General, his Special Representative Mr. Atul Khare and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for the key role they have played in assisting Timor-Leste in that process. We concur wholeheartedly with the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend UNMIT's mandate for one year at its current composition and strength. We will look to UNMIT to continue to play a central role in Timor-Leste, in particular as the national police prepares to resume policing responsibility and as the justice sector builds its capacity.

The United States believes that development and security go hand-in-hand and that one cannot move forward without the other. The Secretary-General's report (S/2009/72) notes a rise in poverty in the country. Our concern for the most vulnerable in Timor-Leste — the poor and the displaced — is also indeed growing. We commend the Government of Timor-Leste for returning nearly all displaced persons to their homes and for resolving the petitioner issue. For lasting stability, however, Timor-Leste will need to continue its development efforts, in particular in rural areas, and work to lower unemployment rates.

Timor-Leste cannot stand on its own without a fully functioning security sector. We very much appreciate UNMIT's careful planning process to enable the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) to gradually resume policing responsibility. Throughout that process, Timorese officers will require continued training in order to meet the security challenges in their country. UNMIT must be diligent about delineating responsibility between the PNTL and UNMIT police. The leadership in Timor-Leste, in concert with the international community, should work to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the nation's military in

relation to the police. Civilian oversight of both the police and the military should be strengthened.

Future progress in Timor-Leste will require a responsive and independent justice sector. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to promote a coordinated approach to justice sector reform, and stress the critical need to reduce the backlog of cases and to establish a comprehensive legal system to hold criminals responsible.

Finally, we encourage the international community to help the Government of Timor-Leste to hold the local elections that are planned for this year. We hope that UNMIT, acting under the terms of its mandate to enhance democratic rule and advance political dialogue, will also work to ensure that the vote goes smoothly.

The achievements made in Timor-Leste give its people a great deal to be proud of. We salute the determination shown by President Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister Gusmão and their Government. We also again extend our thanks to Special Representative Khare, the dedicated UNMIT staff who work alongside him and the United Nations country team. We deeply appreciate the labours and sacrifices of the bilateral and multilateral partners in Timor-Leste and the diligent efforts of the international security forces working there to help maintain law and stability. The people of Timor-Leste still have much to do, but they must know that they do not stand alone.

Mr. Tiendrébéogo (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to join others in welcoming the presence at this debate of President José Ramos-Horta. I would like in particular to thank him for his important and encouraging statement. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his decision to personally introduce his report (S/2009/72) on the situation in Timor-Leste.

My delegation would first like to welcome the calm that prevails today in Timor-Leste, especially following the tragic events of February 2008. Although the situation can still be considered fragile, it is reassuring to note that it is the result of both a courageous policy and the resolute commitment of the country's officials to ensuring full respect for the Constitution and the rule of law. The prevailing situation is also the outcome of an inclusive and participatory approach to the management of public affairs that emphasizes consensus in the search for lasting solutions to national problems such as security sector reform, strengthening governance and the rule of law, and economic development. We hope that the environment of relative stability will be utilized to strengthen mechanisms for consultation and to further promote national dialogue and reconciliation, in line with the efforts already made to that end by President Ramos-Horta and the Government with the help of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and United Nations agencies.

That will require the full support of the entire population, and in particular that of all of Timor-Leste's political actors. The latter in particular have today a historic responsibility to exercise, and it is for that reason that we urge them to demonstrate moderation and the highest level of restraint in order to avoid endangering the still precarious stability. That will be especially important in this year of local elections.

Unfortunately, the young country of Timor-Leste still has to face all sorts of challenges, including those associated with security. In that regard, we should welcome and encourage every effort aimed at strengthening security. My delegation therefore welcomes the efforts made to reform and strengthen security sector institutions. In that regard, we hope that, among other things, the Government will take advantage of UNMIT's expressed readiness to provide advice and operational support, as the obstacles to be overcome in that regard are still numerous and real.

Throughout the country's history, the law and the administration of justice have been of crucial importance in ensuring social justice, the public's trust and the further entrenchment of democracy and the rule of law. We welcome the significant progress made on social matters, especially as regards the issue of the petitioners and displaced persons. That progress is a reflection of the desire of both the Timorese people as a whole and their officials to quickly turn the page on a painful chapter in their history. It is therefore important that, above and beyond the difficulties and incidents referred to in the report of the Secretary-General, we support the genuine efforts being made to combat impunity as well as every initiative aimed at strengthening the capacities of the relevant national institutions.

On the socio-economic front, it is heartening to note that, with the support of its partners, the Government of Timor-Leste has understood the full scope of the challenges and difficulties it faces and that it has already put in place the necessary clear policies to overcome, or at least lessen, them. In that regard, its decision to declare 2009 as the year of infrastructure, rural development and human resource capacity-development is an important one.

Unfortunately, the impact on the levels of poverty is still insufficient. We nevertheless hope that efforts under way will help to reverse that trend. In the knowledge that poverty and the problems associated with it are among the underlying causes of conflict, we hope that the international community will be able to provide the necessary assistance to the country, in particular by financing the 2009-2013 United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the five-pillar National Recovery Strategy aimed at assisting internally displaced persons.

In this regard, we welcome the medium-term strategy drawn up by the United Nations, with the full support of the Government. The strategy will be an important tool not only for consolidating the achievements made in a number of specific areas, but also and above all for revitalizing and devising improved development policies, in the ultimate aim of laying the foundations of a stable, democratic and prosperous Timor-Leste, as clearly noted by the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, I pay tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, and to UNMIT for their efforts in Timor-Leste. Despite the progress that has been achieved in a number of areas, their work is far from over. That is why, in accordance with the wishes of the Timorese authorities, the United Nations and the international community in general must maintain an effective presence in and significant support for the country. In this regard, Burkina Faso supports the recommended extension of the UNMIT mandate by 12 months.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report contained in document S/2009/72 and for his informative briefing on developments in the situation in Timor-Leste.

We are pleased to welcome to the Security Council the President of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta. The tragic events of 11 February 2008 were a source of profound concern for us, and we express our admiration for the steadfast courage shown by the President. We listened carefully to his remarks concerning the success that has been achieved in his country and the complex problems being resolved by the Government and people of Timor-Leste.

It is indeed gratifying that Timor-Leste has achieved significant progress in settling the consequences of the 2006 crisis. The petitioners are returning to peace-time life and internally displaced persons to their homes. The time has come for this young, independent country to focus on other high-priority objectives, including strengthening State institutions and security structures, establishing legality and the rule of law, developing the judicial system, making provisions for social and economic development, eliminating poverty and generating employment for the population. These goals can be achieved only through the concerted efforts and cooperation of all the political forces of the country and civil society. In that context, the holding of local elections, planned for this year, is of great importance.

The strengthening of the national security forces is of the highest priority for the restoration of stability in the country and an important indicator of the self-sufficiency of the State. An important function being carried out by UNMIT is the provision of assistance to Timor-Leste in training a strong and professional national police force that will be able gradually to take over exclusive responsibility for maintaining the rule of law.

In view of Dili's continuing need for the assistance of the international community, we support the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the United Nations Integrated Mission mandate for 12 months. Russia expresses its solidarity with the people and Government of Timor-Leste in their efforts to build a stable, democratic and flourishing State.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): We very much welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), contained in document S/2009/72, and the presence of the Secretary-General himself this morning.

It is a particular honour to have President Ramos-Horta here with us today. It is a great credit to the Government of Timor-Leste, to UNMIT and to the

international security forces that Timor-Leste has enjoyed a stable security situation since the terrible attacks of February 2008.

Significant progress has been made over the past year, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General and the statement of President Ramos-Horta, but, as the Secretary-General also notes, many challenges remain. It is clear that the long-term security and stability of Timor-Leste will depend in particular on building national police and security forces that can take over responsibility from the international force. The challenge over the next few months will be to define a timescale and benchmarks for the resumption of policing responsibilities by the national police and then to move forward with the transfer of those responsibilities.

We welcome the medium-term strategy set out in the Secretary-General's report, which focuses on the four priority areas of the UNMIT mandate. We also welcome the acceptance of these benchmarks by the Government of Timor-Leste. They are consistent with one of the key principles underpinning the international effort in Timor-Leste: that the international community should help the people of the country stand on their own feet. We look forward to reviewing progress against the benchmarks, which will allow UNMIT to begin to scale down its presence in stages as its tasks are completed.

We look to the people and Government of Timor-Leste, supported by the international community, to do everything in their power to continue the positive trends in terms of politics, security and sustainable economic and social development. In particular, the Timorese Government and opposition must develop and implement a shared vision of what kind of country Timor-Leste should be and the way its democratic institutions should function. Secondly, a determined effort must be made by Timorese State institutions, with international support, to build capacity and deliver reform, in particular in the security and justice sectors. We support the Secretary-General's call for the Government of Timor-Leste to commission a comprehensive needs assessment for the judicial sector. We would welcome a firm commitment from the Government of Timor-Leste to taking this forward with the aim of helping to ensure accountability and justice for all. Thirdly, we look forward with great interest to the local elections in Timor-Leste, which will mark another important democratic milestone for the country.

The United Kingdom remains steadfast in its support for the Government and people of Timor-Leste. We have heard a consistent message from the representatives of Timor-Leste in this Chamber over the past year, and again today from President Ramos-Horta. They want UNMIT to stay and to support their progress towards self-sustaining independence and economic development. We are sympathetic to that message.

The United Kingdom supports the extension of the UNMIT mandate by a further 12 months, in recognition of the challenges that East Timor continues to face. We are confident that this will continue to be a partnership, in which UNMIT plays a supporting role to the efforts of the Government.

We thank Special Representative Khare and his team for the excellent work they continue to carry out. We must also look forward to the day when their work will be done.

Mr. İlkin (Turkey): I should first like to welcome the President of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, and to thank him for his extensive and enlightening briefing on his young nation. We are deeply honoured by his presence today. We are also delighted to see him fully recovered after the cowardly attack of 2008 on democracy and stability in Timor-Leste. The Timorese people's reaction to this attack by further embracing the agenda of reform and development was most remarkable.

Today, we are pleased to see that the security situation in Timor-Leste has substantially improved since last February, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/2009/72. These improvements have provided the opportunity to focus on key issues such as security reform, the rule of law, democratic governance and socio-economic development. At this point, I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report and his remarks today, and Special Representative Atul Khare for his continuous to efforts in assisting Timor-Leste in these endeavours.

That said, much remains to be done in order to ensure that the achievements realized so far can be sustained and carried forward. In this regard, the main challenges, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's

report, are poverty, unemployment, uncontrolled migration, the lack of effective land and property regimes, a weak judicial system and security institutions still in need of development. The local elections to be conducted this year will also be an important test.

Given the progress made so far, we are confident that Timor-Leste will overcome those challenges and achieve self-sufficiency. However, that will require continued national dialogue and unity, as well as the articulation of clear strategies and plans. Transparency and accountability in the policy and decision-making processes are also keys to success.

In that context, we believe that the United Nations still has a valuable role to play. There is no doubt that the joint efforts of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the United Nations country team are instrumental in providing coordinated policy, political, technical and financial support to help the people of Timor-Leste accomplish their goals.

The two priority areas in which UNMIT is and should continue to be most active are facilitating a constructive political dialogue within the country and ensuring the success of security sector reform. In that regard, we are pleased to see a general consensus that the gradual handover of policing responsibilities from UNMIT to the Timorese national police should not be bound by restrictive timetables and that the emphasis must be placed on meeting the necessary criteria. Indeed, that is of the utmost importance if public security is to be maintained at this critical stage.

Likewise, we also concur with the Secretary-General in his call for the definition of a meaningful role for the Timorese army in a peacetime setting. In that regard, we think that, if the 1,300-strong army could be oriented and trained towards contributing to peacekeeping operations, it might at some point be put to good use in a number of peacekeeping missions throughout the world.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General about the need for a continued robust UNMIT police presence across the country and therefore endorse his recommendation that UNMIT's mandate be extended for a further period of 12 months, maintaining the Mission's current composition and strength.

In conclusion, we are confident that Timor-Leste, under the able leadership of President Ramos-Horta and with the help of the United Nations, will continue to make impressive strides towards peace, security and prosperity. Turkey will continue to support the young but vibrant Timorese nation on its promising journey.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by welcoming the presence of His Excellency President José Ramos-Horta. My Government recognizes his unceasing efforts to develop and strengthen democracy in his country, as well as his desire to promote an inclusive vision of national life. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his message and to take advantage of the presence of his Special Representative, Mr. Atul Khare, to thank him and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for their efforts to facilitate dialogue among political actors, to lay the groundwork for development and to consolidate the foundations of democratic governance in Timor-Leste. My thanks go also to the United Nations agencies present in Timor-Leste.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/72) presents a view of the process being experienced by the citizens of Timor-Leste and of their efforts to achieve their common goals and develop the institutions that will help them to do so. But the report also describes a number of obstacles hindering that process. Above all, it expresses concern about the behaviour of some political actors who have yet to fully accept the basic principles of democracy.

The international community is waiting for all political actors to display a mature attitude. Such conduct is a necessary ingredient for other actions urgently needed by Timorese society. Progress must be made in improving understanding of democratic governance and in preparing and adopting legal frameworks aimed at consolidating it. In that context, we believe that the work being done by the electoral agencies, the political parties and the media is of capital importance.

Also important is the progress that has been made in improving security and strengthening the institutions that guarantee it. The advances made with regard to the exercise and guarantee of human rights are especially satisfying. We are particularly encouraged by the actions taken to reduce incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, and we call on UNMIT to continue its

support for the formulation of a national gender policy and strategy. In addition, we recognize all the efforts being made and actions being taken to build a judicial system that supports the progress made in maintaining security and promoting human rights.

With regard to socio-economic development in Timor-Leste, the encouraging news about economic progress and growth and the improvement in health-related aspects is somewhat overshadowed in the social arena by the growth of poverty and unemployment. We hope that the Government's activities to promote employment — which President José Ramos-Horta told us about today — and other actions to improve access to food staples will reverse the increase in the poverty rate.

In addition, we are confident that the medium-term strategy that has been adopted will guide the country's socio-economic, political, institutional and cultural development. We recognize the importance of the benchmarks that have been adopted, which will enable the country to gauge future progress and will enable the Council to assess the quality and the modalities of the support that the United Nations system will have to provide to Timor-Leste in the future.

Finally, I welcome the optimism about this country reflected in the Secretary-General's report. We hope that, with the support of UNMIT and the work of its people under its leadership, Timor-Leste will consolidate the foundations of peace and stability, which will enable it to achieve sustainable development for its inhabitants.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Japan.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and Special Representative Atul Khare for their presence in the Council today. We very much appreciate the strong commitment of all those people working within the United Nations to support the nation-building effort of Timor-Leste. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency President José Ramos-Horta, Foreign Minister Da Costa and the other members of the high-level Timorese delegation.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the historic popular consultations in which the people of Timor-Leste demonstrated their strong desire for independence. Despite the lamentable turmoil that followed, Timor-Leste has risen, first by gaining independence and then by following the path of consolidating peace and stability.

Japan is pleased that it has been able to associate itself with that transformation as one of the strongest supporters from the very outset. It hosted the first donor conference 10 years ago and, as one of top donors, has provided substantial assistance since then. Contingents of the Japan Self-Defence Forces assisted in the reconstruction of the country. We have also sent police to help train local police officers.

I would like to reaffirm Japan's continued commitment to supporting efforts in Timor-Leste. So it is a double pleasure and honour for me, during Japan's Council presidency, to have the opportunity to discuss the progress and the prospects of Timor-Leste.

Since 1999, the United Nations has been the focal point of international assistance for this young country. The current mission, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), was established to help the country regain stability after the crisis in 2006. We applaud the strides that the Timorese Government and people have made towards stability and democracy. The country demonstrated the resilience of its institutions by weathering the attempted assassination of the President and the Prime Minister.

Much related to the two major concerns about security have also been resolved: the first group of petitioners was disbanded peacefully and a significant number of internally displaced persons returned home. We are grateful to those Member States participating in the international security forces for their contributions.

We also commend the leaders of Timor-Leste for continuing their efforts to bridge differences through an inclusive political dialogue. Parliament plays an important role in promoting a culture of democratic governance. We should extend support to Timor-Leste to ensure the success of the forthcoming local elections, since local governance is also fundamental.

Yet we must face the situation there, which is calm but fragile. The country is at a critical stage in its efforts to consolidate its achievements and pave the path to self-sufficiency and sustainable development.

The orderly resumption of police responsibilities by the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) is the key task for UNMIT this year. A strong security

institution is a cornerstone for the country. To build such an institution, the transfer of responsibilities should be based on a realistic assessment of the operational capacity of the PNTL. We endorse the approach of ensuring that the transfer process is bound by strict criteria and that the authorized UNMIT police force stays at the current level, at least for the next 12 months, so that it will be equipped for contingencies. The Secretary-General should be given flexibility on the level of police strength to deal with the situation on the ground.

For the success of the peacekeeping effort, early planning for consolidating peace over the medium term is indispensable. We therefore welcome the helpful strategy and benchmarks. We believe that the Government of Timor-Leste must take ownership of the strategy for its implementation, with the assistance of the international community. We know that the consolidation of peace requires painstaking, long-term sustained efforts, as President Ramos-Horta said this morning, and that it must proceed in an integrated manner. Together with enhancement of the security sector and judicial institutions, poverty reduction and the creation of employment and economic opportunity must be pursued most vigorously.

It is not too early, while the peacekeeping mission carries out its mandate, to start focusing a peacebuilding perspective on how to achieve economic growth and how to sustain growth and development. In particular, effective measures for rural development and agriculture, and creating employment opportunities for young people, are urgently needed. The population of Timor-Leste is among the youngest in the world and its potential is therefore great to develop human resources. We welcome the fact that the Government attaches high priority to education and vocational training, as well as to infrastructure.

We congratulate the new graduates of the national university of Timor-Leste, who graduated last month. It is my belief that the future of any country rests with such young and motivated students, to whom the task of building the nation is entrusted. Japan will spare no effort to help the young people of Timor-Leste develop their full potential and contribute to the development of their country.

In conclusion, Japan believes that the presence of UNMIT is an essential stabilizing factor for Timor-Leste. We therefore support the extension of the UNMIT mandate for another 12 months, as recommended by the Secretary-General and as endorsed by the leaders of the country. As the lead country, Japan will submit a draft resolution to extend the mandate of UNMIT. I would like to ask for members' continued cooperation in expressing the Security Council's unanimous support for the work of the United Nations in Timor-Leste, and for the efforts of its Government and people.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your work as President of the Security Council this month, and express our appreciation for your decision to hold an open debate on Timor-Leste.

I am pleased to welcome His Excellency President José Ramos-Horta, who honours us with his presence today. It is a great joy to see him fully recovered from the tragic attacks that he and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão suffered last year. We also appreciated the presence of the Secretary-General this morning, and we sincerely thank him and his Special Representative, Mr. Atul Khare, for the outstanding work being carried out in Timor-Leste.

The bonds between Brazil and Timor-Leste are strong and reflect a deep sense of friendship and solidarity, as well as a shared heritage, as stressed by President Lula during his latest visit to Dili, in July 2008. The fact that this visit was the first by a foreign head of State after 11 February 2008 should not be overlooked, as it shows our firm confidence in the Timorese people and in their exceptional capacity to overcome challenges. The intensity of our relations is also attested to by the fact that earlier in the same year President Lula had welcomed President Ramos-Horta in Brasilia.

The close link between Brazil and Timor-Leste is evident in our bilateral cooperation, which encompasses several areas, such as judiciary training and legal development, education, agriculture, health, capacity-building, military cooperation, the fight against hunger and poverty, the training of diplomats and sports. The possibility of extending such cooperation to projects in the fields of renewable sources of energy, the environment, culture, and budget planning is now being considered.

My delegation is encouraged by the progress made by Timor-Leste in normalizing the political and security situation. We celebrate the lifting of the state of exception introduced after the events of February last year. The fact that the constitution has been upheld since the adoption of those exceptional measures is no small deed, especially in a young democracy. Such a display of political and institutional maturity deserves our full recognition and active support. The efforts made by the President and the Prime Minister to foster dialogue among the political parties and forces are also key to building a culture of cooperation for the common good.

We commend the Timorese Government for the significant improvement made in ensuring the return of internally displaced persons. We hope that the remaining camps will be closed soon. We agree with the Secretary-General that long-term success depends on further socio-economic and security-related measures. We also praise the Timorese Government for successfully addressing the situation of the petitioners; continued efforts will be needed to ensure their full social integration. In both cases, the international community must support Timor-Leste, as requested by the Timorese authorities.

At the same time, we are concerned that substantial challenges still remain. Deep poverty is not only disturbing from a human point of view but also far-reaching in its potential impact. The persistence of deprivation calls for renewed efforts by the international community to support the Timorese Government and people. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2009-2013 and the Government's decision to designate 2009 as the year of infrastructure, rural development and capacity development provide the necessary guidance and basis for our common endeavours.

Regarding the key issue of security sector reform, it is encouraging that continued efforts have led to further progress in the registration, screening and certification programme for the national police and that the Government and UNMIT have reached broad agreement on the resumption of policing responsibilities by the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL). We understand and support the willingness of the Timorese Government to assume such responsibilities and view the phased approach to the transfer of functions as an adequate means to achieve the shared goal of full institutional normalization in the security area in a safe and orderly manner.

The resumption of responsibilities by the PNTL is a gradual process that will take time to materialize. When it does, the Council will be able to assess its effectiveness. While, as a rule, developments on the ground should be reflected in the composition and functions of any given mission, we cannot afford early downsizing that might later prove to be unsustainable. I am convinced that the Council is fully aware of the need to avoid such an undesired scenario anywhere, including in Timor-Leste.

Another important aspect to be considered with regard to security in Timor-Leste is the function of the military. We support efforts to address relevant matters such as the separation of internal and external security roles and responsibilities between the national police and the military, the strengthening of legal frameworks and the enhancement of civilian oversight and accountability mechanisms.

Brazil was touched by the decision of the Timorese parliament to establish the Sergio Vieira de Mello Human Rights Awards for Timor-Leste. It is a fitting tribute to Sergio Vieira de Mello and a welcome initiative to make his legacy a continued source of inspiration.

In concluding, I believe that we all agree on the overall assessment of the situation in Timor-Leste. The country is on the right track thanks to its dedicated efforts and the cooperation of the international community. Such partnership needs to be strengthened in the years to come in order to consolidate gains already made and successfully overcome the remaining challenges. Brazil is fully committed to continued cooperation with the Timorese Government and other international actors to build a stable and prosperous Timor-Leste.

The President: I call on the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Mr. President, let me begin by commending you for convening this important debate on the situation in Timor-Leste and at the same time congratulating you on your very able stewardship of the Council during the month of February. I wish also to join previous speakers in welcoming President José Ramos-Horta of Timor-Leste

to this body and thanking him for his important statement today.

We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2009/72) and for his important statement. Of course, we wish to express our appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, for his important work.

We wish to associate ourselves with the statement to be made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

As its closest neighbour, we are following closely the developments in Timor-Leste and are heartened to note a number of positive developments in the country during the Secretary-General's reporting period. As stated in the Secretary-General's report, the security situation in the country remains calm. The people and leaders of Timor-Leste have made remarkable progress in overcoming the most visible reminders of the 2006 crisis, including the issues of the internally displaced persons and the so-called petitioners. The Government's five-pillar National Recovery Strategy for dealing with the consequences of the crisis has proved to be effective and fruitful.

As the resilience of Timor-Leste State institutions has proved, in particular as exemplified in dealing with the consequences of the incidents of 11 February 2008, and due to the progress made in addressing the issues related to the 2006 crisis, public confidence in these institutions is growing and welcome.

There has been important progress in reconciliation and democracy as well. All the political parties continue to work constructively in Parliament. Dialogue among the stakeholders continues to be pursued to promote broad consensus in dealing with the important challenges confronting the country. It is worth noting that, as mentioned in the report, President Ramos-Horta has made laudable efforts to create opportunities for the opposition to make contributions to issues of national interest. Indeed, those positive developments reflect the progress in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

We encourage UNMIT to help maintain this conducive environment and to support, to the best of its ability, the Government of Timor-Leste in making further progress in tackling the challenges it currently faces. In particular, we encourage UNMIT to devote more attention to mobilizing support among development partners to address poverty and unemployment in Timor-Leste. In the past, these two issues manifestly contributed to the 2006 crisis, and addressing them will also contribute to the long-term stability of the country in the future.

We appreciate UNMIT's continued efforts to assist the Government in the promotion of security sector reform. We are of the view that long-term security and stability in the country will depend on the capacity of Timor-Leste security institutions to function in an accountable, impartial, responsible and effective manner.

With regard to UNMIT's mandate to assist in the promotion of democratic governance, it is crucial that the Mission continue to assist Timor-Leste in its institution-building efforts and in further ensuring that State institutions function properly. We encourage UNMIT to support Government endeavours to increase opportunities for the people of Timor-Leste to take on judicial line functions. We support the Government's efforts to achieve early and effective Timorization of the justice system, as described in the Secretary-General's report.

We note with interest the proposed medium-term strategy developed by the Secretary-General as an annex to his report. We believe that the strategy should be developed on the basis of the national priorities of Timor-Leste and place emphasis on the ownership and leadership of the Government of Timor-Leste in their implementation. We believe that the implementation of the medium-term strategy should lead to the gradual ownership by Timor-Leste of tasks currently being performed by UNMIT.

We continue to support UNMIT in implementing its mandate with a view to assisting the people and the Government of Timor-Leste in achieving self-sufficiency. We recognize the need to ensure the sustainability of the international community's support to Timor-Leste's efforts on its path to security and prosperity. In this regard, we welcome the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the Council renew UNMIT's mandate for another 12 months.

As a final note, we are pleased to inform the Council that Indonesia and Timor-Leste continue to

enjoy an excellent level of bilateral relations. We continue to move forward in deepening and expanding our bilateral cooperation in various areas. We recognize that Timor-Leste has become a much-valued partner in the region. It is the firm commitment of Indonesia to continue to support Timor-Leste in its efforts to achieve a stable, prosperous and democratic country.

The President: I call on the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Gatan (Philippines): At the outset, the Philippines wishes to thank Japan, which holds the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February 2009, for convening this open debate on Timor-Leste, and commends it for taking the lead on Timor-Leste in the Council. We welcome the presence here today of President José Ramos-Horta and thank him for his important statement this morning. We also thank the Secretary-General for presenting the report on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2009/72).

The Philippines also associates itself with the statement that will be delivered by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The Philippines is encouraged by the positive developments that have continued to take place in Timor-Leste since the last Security Council meeting on the subject in August 2008. The leaders and the people of Timor-Leste should be commended for overcoming the past crises and for persevering in their efforts to achieve long-term peace, stability and development. The United Nations and the international community, particularly the donors and regional partners, must continue to fully support Timor-Leste in staying on course on its painful path of nation-building.

The Philippines submits that the international community must give its priority attention to three key areas: security, socio-economic development and judicial reform.

The Philippines recognizes the important role that UNMIT plays in promoting peace and stability in Timor-Leste. The international community should support UNMIT's ongoing efforts to facilitate the gradual resumption of policing responsibilities by the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL), as well as other functions, such as the further training, mentoring and institutional development of the PNTL, interim law enforcement and public security, until the PNTL is fully reconstituted. In this regard, the Philippines supports the extension of the mandate of UNMIT for a period of 12 months at its current composition and strength.

The Philippines continues to stress the importance of sustained international community support for the socio-economic development of Timor-Leste. For its part, the Philippines is pleased to inform the Council that 99 Timorese students arrived in the Philippines on 13 January 2009 to take up various courses at Philippine colleges and universities. These students represent the initial batch of Timorese Government scholars, and more are expected to arrive in 2009 and succeeding years. The Philippines also wishes to inform the Council that the Philippine Secretary of Agriculture will lead an investment mission to Timor-Leste on 22 February 2009 to explore areas related to food security in which the Philippines could provide assistance.

The Philippines supports efforts on judicial reform, especially in building capacity and strengthening the judicial system, thereby ensuring in the long run an independent judiciary manned by competent judges and personnel. No one can argue that an independent judiciary is the last bulwark of democracy and the guardian of the rule of law. We are pleased to note that the third post-graduate training course for judges, prosecutors and public defenders, organized by the Legal Training Centre supported by the United Nations Development Programme, began on 29 July 2009. We hope that the international community will continue to support such work to increase Timorese ownership and to strengthen national capacity judicial line functions.

In conclusion, we must be unceasing in our support for Timor-Leste so that it continues to be one of the best examples of a successful international enterprise engineered through the combined cooperative efforts of the United Nations, regional players and partners.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Hill (Australia): We once again appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Security Council's deliberations on Timor-Leste. Like others, we are particularly pleased to see President Ramos-Horta here

today and take the opportunity to acknowledge his significant personal efforts to promote peace and national reconciliation in Timor-Leste.

Australia is heartened by the Government of Timor-Leste's progress in addressing long-standing security and development challenges, including resettling internally displaced persons and negotiating a resolution with the petitioners. The Government's quick and effective response to the attacks on the Timorese leadership on 11 February 2008 has contributed to the current stable security environment in Timor-Leste. Improved stability has allowed the Government of Timor-Leste to focus on much needed socio-economic development.

Australia would also like to take the opportunity to praise the efforts of Timor-Leste's partners, in particular the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), under the very able leadership of Mr. Atul Khare. It is UNMIT's ongoing support to the Timor-Leste Government that provides the enabling environment and stability to allow the Government to move forward.

While Timor-Leste has made good progress, the Secretary-General's report (S/2009/72) makes clear that there is no room for complacency. We agree. Much needs to be done before its longer-term stability and economic development can be assured. Meanwhile, Timor-Leste will require continued strong support from the United Nations and bilateral partners.

In Australia's view, nowhere is that more apparent than in the security sector. Australia welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendations for a 12-month mandate extension, with no reduction to the authorized United Nations police levels. We note that the United Nations is working with the Government of Timor-Leste to ensure a phased resumption of policing responsibilities, and we welcome the negotiation of clearly defined criteria between Timor-Leste and UNMIT to gauge the readiness of the national police (PNTL) to assume responsibility. The challenges facing PNTL should not be underestimated and will be ongoing. Until the police force has been significantly strengthened, it will be vital to retain an ongoing strong United Nations police presence to underpin security. Without that, other gains will be jeopardized.

Australia sees itself as a steadfast friend and neighbour of Timor-Leste and will continue to be at the forefront of international efforts to assist it towards long-term stability and greater prosperity. Through our leadership of the International Stabilisation Force and with the strong support of New Zealand, we are pleased to have helped the Timor-Leste Government and UNMIT stabilize Timor-Leste's security environment. Also, Australia, as a leading development partner, will continue to take a long-term approach to addressing the many development challenges facing Timor-Leste, including in relation to youth unemployment and delivery of basic Government services.

Given the importance of security sector strengthening, assistance to Timor-Leste's police and military forces will continue to be a particular focus for Australia's enhanced engagement. We also welcome the work to strengthen Timor-Leste's justice sector, which remains fundamental to consolidating the rule of law and preventing the re-emergence of political violence. Australia will continue to offer assistance in that regard.

As Timor-Leste turns its mind increasingly to longer-term security and development challenges, the international community will need to remain fully engaged. Effective cooperation and coordination between donors are crucial in ensuring that Timor-Leste is well placed to address the challenges ahead.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Palouš (Czech Republic): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

First and foremost, let me extend our warm welcome to President José Ramos-Horta of Timor-Leste. The European Union highly appreciates his courage and his dedication to securing a better future for the people of Timor-Leste. It is a pleasure to hold today's debate with President Ramos-Horta present, especially when recalling the terrible events of 11 February 2008.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2009/72), the Japanese presidency of the Security Council for convening this open debate, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, for the tireless work of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) on the ground, which is highly appreciated by the international community.

The European Union has been following the recent developments in Timor-Leste with great interest. We commend the Government and people of Timor-Leste for their efforts to achieve long-term stability and ensure sustainable development in all spheres of public life in the country. Since 1999, the European Union has provided about €327 million in development and humanitarian assistance. We are committed to continuing our support in crucial public sector areas. For the period from 2008 to 2013, the European Union is providing support of about €81 million in areas such as institutional capacity-building, rural development, assistance to the health sector and food security.

Furthermore, under the Instrument for Stability, the European Commission is providing support to Timor-Leste in security sector reform, the social reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and employment generation. In those areas, the European Union works closely with the United Nations Development Programme, the International Organization for Migration and the International Labour Organization.

The European Union commends recent positive developments in the security situation in Timor-Leste and acknowledges the significant progress achieved in addressing the challenges of the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste petitioners and the return of internally displaced persons. In that respect, the closure of a large number of IDP camps in Dili and Bacau and the process of reintegration are encouraging signs. The European Union has taken note of them with appreciation. At the same time, the European Union encourages the Government of Timor-Leste to continue its efforts and to focus on long-term solutions to those challenges.

The active engagement of the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) and of UNMIT, which have contributed considerably to internal security, calls our attention to the question of resumption of responsibilities by the PNTL. In that regard, the European Union welcomes the possibility of starting that process on 27 March 2009, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General. In addition, the European Union looks forward to receiving a document defining the specific roles of UNMIT police and the UNMIT-PNTL engagement, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, which is to be submitted before gradually handing over responsibilities to the PNTL.

The European Union expresses its full support for the role performed by UNMIT, especially the United Nations police contingent, as well as for other relevant actors implementing the security sector reform plan. The European Union underlines the need to intensify training activities for the PNTL, including in the area of human rights, and supports the development of a comprehensive and coherent concept for the whole security sector, which should be elaborated in a coordinated, inclusive and transparent manner and with the direct involvement of all relevant governmental and non-governmental actors. The recent establishment of the security sector reform team in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, and the attention that the team and the United Nations task force on security sector reform have been paying to addressing the needs of Timor-Leste in the area of security sector reform are very welcome and encouraging developments. It cannot be overemphasized that all this would not make sense without the direct and active involvement of Timor-Leste and without true national ownership of security sector reform processes.

Along the lines of the Secretary-General's report, the European Union remains concerned about the situation of the judiciary. Further support with regard to the backlog of judicial cases is necessary in order to help mitigate the difficult situation. On its part, the European Union will continue to assist Timor-Leste in developing its justice sector and reinforcing the rule of law. An identification mission has already been sent to the country, with a mandate to identify specific support to the National Parliament as a way to support political and democratic dialogue in the country.

The European Union is also concerned about the socio-economic situation in Timor-Leste despite positive results as far as overall economic growth is concerned. The Union is especially concerned about World Bank data regarding the increase in the poverty rate, which has reached about 50 per cent, and the high rate of unemployment, which could potentially lead to

renewed instability. It is therefore the European Union's aim to support labour-intensive work programmes, mainly through the implementation of the rural development programme. The European Union also encourages Timor-Leste to make use of the Petroleum Fund for future investment projects and to stimulate the non-oil part of the economy by creating new job opportunities and through basic infrastructure development.

The European Union appreciates the Secretary-General's presentation in his report the medium-term strategy for UNMIT, with illustrative benchmarks for the four mandated priority areas — the review and reform of the security sector, the strengthening of the rule of law, economic and social development and the promotion of a culture of democratic governance dialogue — as requested by resolution 1802 (2008).

The international community is eagerly awaiting the Government's revised national development plan, which is to focus on poverty reduction as called for under the 2008 national priorities, thereby signalling Government ownership of the process and giving donors a longer-term orientation, including the possibility of alignment according to the Accra Agenda for Action.

Bearing in mind the persisting political, security and economic challenges at hand, the European Union fully supports the extension of UNMIT's mandate for another 12 months, at the current composition and strength, as recommended in the Secretary-General's report. The European Union is convinced that such an extension will help to ensure continuity in further stabilizing the country.

Last, but not least, the European Union will follow with great interest the 2009 local elections in Timor-Leste as another important milestone in the country's democratic processes and as a significant indicator of the progress achieved so far in the area of institutional capacity-building and democratic governance, which are both so crucial to ensuring stability and good governance in the country.

In conclusion, I would like to reassure President Ramos-Horta and the Timorese people of the European Union's unwavering commitment to assisting their country in achieving further positive results in their country's stabilization and reconstruction and in addressing remaining challenges.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Ireland.

Mr. Kavanagh (Ireland): Ireland welcomes this opportunity to address the Security Council during its open debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. I am delighted to join others in saluting the presence here of President Ramos-Horta and welcoming the statement he delivered earlier.

Let me immediately associate Ireland with the statement that has just been delivered by the Ambassador of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union (EU).

We endorse the Secretary-General's acknowledgment in his comprehensive report (S/2009/72) of the remarkable progress made by the leaders and people of Timor-Leste since 2006. As a country that has also struggled with the challenges that face a small, newly independent nation, Ireland recognizes the magnitude of Timor-Leste's accomplishments. We commend it for its many achievements.

President Ramos-Horta's recovery from the attack of February 2008 and his continued leadership have played no small part in the maintenance of peace and stability in Timor-Leste. On behalf of my Government, I would also like to acknowledge the role of Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão and opposition leader Mari Alkatiri, who have displayed true leadership and patriotism during many challenging times.

Ireland has actively supported the people of Timor-Leste during their struggle and throughout the process of transition to independence. We continue to be actively engaged there. Following the vote for independence in 1999, the focus of our support was on the deployment of Irish troops, who served as members of three successive missions: the International Force, East Timor, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor and the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor. In addition, Ireland participated in United Nations and EU observation missions for the referendum in 1999 and the elections in 2001 and 2002.

Our multi-year priority development programme in Timor-Leste, which is managed through our mission in Dili, has focused on efforts to promote post-conflict reconstruction through good governance, the

strengthening of democracy and the justice sector, public sector development, the promotion of human rights and gender equality, and support for the development of a strong civil society.

Under Ireland's new conflict resolution initiative, we have added a further dimension to our support with, I am happy to say, the full agreement and encouragement of the Government of Timor-Leste. The purpose of that new engagement on our part is to assist Timor-Leste in its transition from conflict to peace, with particular focus on peacemaking, peacebuilding and lesson-sharing. The initiative is being led by our first roving ambassador for conflict resolution and special envoy to Timor-Leste, Dame Nuala O'Loan. I am delighted to acknowledge her presence among our delegation today for this important discussion.

Ireland's conflict resolution engagement in Timor-Leste, in close cooperation with Irish Aid's development programme there, is designed to address key issues directly related to the sources of fragility. Initiatives taken so far include support for structured high-level dialogue among Timor-Leste's leaders, a programme on peace, remembrance and reconciliation, and advice on security sector reform.

The need to address security sector reform and the respective roles and responsibilities of the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste and the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) have rightly been acknowledged, in the current report of the Secretary-General and in earlier ones, as being absolutely crucial to peace and stability. Ireland also plans to launch an early-warning and response system in Timor-Leste, based in civil society there.

I am pleased to report that our Special Envoy has had many very constructive discussions with the leaders of Timor-Leste. These discussions have demonstrated the shared desire to avoid further upheaval and to build on the progress made. I would also like to note our appreciation for the advice offered by Special Representative Atul Khare and the UNMIT team and for their support for Dame Nuala O'Loan's engagement; they continue to do an outstanding job in Timor-Leste.

My Government's Conflict Resolution Initiative has a specific focus on lesson-sharing, which draws from the experiences we garnered from the Northern Ireland peace process. The experiences and insights brought to bear by our Special Envoy, drawn from her former role as Northern Ireland's first Police Ombudsman during a critical transition period, are, in our view, a particularly valuable asset with regard to the current issues to be addressed in Timor-Leste's own transition to the full resumption of policing powers by the PNTL and the eventual withdrawal of UNPOL.

We fully endorse the view of the Secretary-General that this process of transition must be undertaken with great care and great prudence, carefully assessing the fulfilment of all the critical benchmarks. The role of the security sector reform experts within UNMIT — which enjoys Ireland's direct support — and the input of the security sector reform unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will be vitally important in this process. We, of course, welcome the Secretary-General's latest report to the Council (S/2009/72) and look forward to early action by the Council in response to it.

Ireland has also launched a lesson-sharing process between organizations working on gender issues in Northern Ireland, Ireland as a whole, Liberia and Timor-Leste. The cross-learning process on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, is designed to facilitate the sharing of national experiences with a view to encouraging best practices and is intended to act as a catalyst for discussions on effective implementation. In addition to a meeting of representatives from those areas that was held in Dublin last November, an Irish project team recently carried out missions to Monrovia and Dili. The outcome of this process will also feed into the development of Ireland's own national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000).

In drawing to a conclusion, I should like to state that Ireland is encouraged by the progress made by Timor-Leste towards overcoming the obstacles and issues that that country has faced in recent years. We are committed to continuing our engagement in Timor-Leste — with the Government, with civil society, with the United Nations and with the European Union — in support of the positive efforts being made by the Timorese people to build this young State in a way that will enable it to realize its full and manifest potential.

In this context, I join others in commending the Security Council's continuing attention to this urgent and vital issue.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Juul (Norway): The situation in Timor-Leste has continued to improve in spite of the regrettable attacks on the Government in 2006 and most recently in February 2008. The United Nations plays a vital role in supporting stability and economic development in Timor-Leste.

Norway commends the Government of Timor-Leste for its handling of the attacks in 2008. The Government moved decisively to assert its authority and rapidly re-established law and order. In the aftermath of the attacks, the Government took steps to resolve the problems of internally displaced persons and to reintegrate the petitioners into civilian life.

Yet stability in Timor-Leste remains fragile. The underlying challenges that contributed to the recent crises, such as growing poverty, unstable security institutions and a weak judicial system, remain to be addressed. Norway supports the Secretary-General's assessment that, until these challenges are tackled, there is a danger that any progress could be derailed.

Economic development in Timor-Leste will contribute to national stability. Norway will continue to support the Government and the United Nations in building a democratic State and fighting poverty. We recognize the progress made in including women and youth in the nation-building process and urge the Government to pay continued attention to these groups.

Attaining durable peace and stability in Timor-Leste requires reform of the security forces. There is a need for clear separation of internal and external security responsibilities between the national police and the military. While the process must be led by the Timorese Government, Norway supports the continued efforts of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) to strengthen discipline and enhance civilian control. The Government must also ensure cooperation between the defence forces and their Indonesian counterparts in securing their common border.

Norway believes further efforts are needed to solve the problem of the internally displaced persons. The judicial sector, which continues to be weak and overburdened, needs to be strengthened. Any political interference in the justice system must be avoided, as it may undermine public trust in the judiciary and jeopardize the separation of powers, as guaranteed by the constitution.

Norway is concerned that parliament again has postponed the long-awaited debate on the recommendations of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation on the Indonesian occupation. It is our hope that parliament will set a new date for the debate as soon as possible. Solutions to the recommendations of both this Commission and the Commission of Truth and Friendship must be found within the framework of applicable law and international human rights. A criminal justice approach needs to be complemented with a non-formal system of truth and reconciliation, as we have seen in other countries. Impunity runs the risk of undermining public trust in the rule of law.

Norway supports an extension of UNMIT's mandate for a period of 12 months, at the Mission's current composition and strength. Other peacebuilding mechanisms, such as the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund, should be assessed for a later stage. We pay tribute to the nations participating in the UNMIT operation, as well as to those contributing to the International Stabilization Force.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): I thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Timor-Leste (S/2009/72). I also thank you, Mr. President, having convened this open debate. We value very highly Japan's leadership in the Security Council and in the Timor-Leste Core Group.

It is an honour and a pleasure to welcome President Ramos-Horta one year after the serious attack on his life. The President's recovery and resumption of responsibilities is a tribute to his strength and determination. We also thank him for his recent visit to New Zealand.

We congratulate the Government of Timor-Leste and President Ramos-Horta on the significant progress made over the past year. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), under the leadership of Mr. Khare, has a critical and ongoing role to play in Timor-Leste, helped by the International Stabilization Force, to which New Zealand continues to contribute, working with Australia.

As noted in the Secretary-General's report, there have indeed been many encouraging developments over the past years: the closure of most internally

displaced persons camps; the resolution of the petitioners issue; the more stable, though still fragile, security situation; and the efforts being made to strengthen institutions and to stimulate economic development.

Continuing effort to strengthen democratic governance is also a vital ingredient for going forward. We strongly encourage the political parties and the people of Timor-Leste to continue to consolidate their democratic institutions and to make full use of parliament to resolve all political differences. Local elections in 2009 are an important part of this process and should be supported by UNMIT and other partners.

A great deal of work lies ahead for the Government and for UNMIT. An immediate challenge is transferring policing responsibilities to the National Police Force of Timor-Leste. New Zealand welcomes the planned commencement of that process and the joint assessment currently being carried out by the Government and UNMIT. We believe that, if implemented properly, the mutually agreed criteria for assessing the state of readiness of each district will help to ensure that each area is in fact ready and able to take over full policing responsibilities. We strongly support the phased implementation of that process. UNMIT will need to monitor it closely and be ready to step in and provide additional support if necessary.

We believe that a single policing model needs to be agreed in the coming months and that this will enable international policing assistance to be channelled more effectively. New Zealand is pleased that its pilot community policing project in Becora and Suai has received a positive response.

We acknowledge the broader efforts undertaken in the security sector, including the recent seminar in Dili, and we encourage the Government and UNMIT to continue that work. We believe that clearly defining the respective roles of the military and the police and strengthening the civilian oversight mechanisms are necessary for long-term stability.

Accountability issues and, especially, countering perceptions of impunity are relevant to the development of the justice sector. They affect its credibility and strength. We acknowledge the serious constraints in the justice sector and the need for international support to accelerate the development of national capacity. Dialogue and reconciliation efforts are also relevant, and we value the essential role that President Ramos-Horta is playing in that respect.

In conclusion, New Zealand strongly supports the extension of UNMIT for 12 months at its current authorized level, as recommended by the Secretary-General. As a regional partner and friend, we remain committed to assisting Timor-Leste. We continue to offer our support and encouragement to President Ramos-Horta, to all the leaders and people of Timor-Leste and to Mr. Khare and the UNMIT team.

The President: I now call on the representative of Italy.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): I join previous speakers in extending a warm welcome to President Ramos-Horta, who honours us with his presence today. His wisdom and vision have guided his young country through its first years of existence, and they are still needed to stay the course. I also thank the Japanese presidency of the Council for convening today's open debate, the Secretary-General for his detailed briefing on the situation in Timor-Leste and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the leadership that he has shown in this Mission in a challenging environment.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add just a few remarks drawing on the Italian national experience.

Together with its European Union partners, Italy has supported the national reconciliation process and the consolidation of Timorese democracy at every stage of its development. We have done so through bilateral initiatives and contributions to multilateral institutions. I should like to mention our participation in the multinational force and, in the years following independence, our initiatives to support the local population and consolidate Timorese democracy. We have focused on key sectors, such as training civil servants, justice and support for the Parliament in Dili.

Italy remains committed to supporting Timor-Leste in its quest to consolidate peace, democracy and development. Let me therefore express our satisfaction at the country's progress, particularly in the area of security and in dealing with the closure of camps for internally displaced persons and the reintegration of the petitioners into civilian life.

Both the performance and the organization of the Timor-Leste police have improved. Nevertheless, we believe that the process of strengthening security will take several years and that UNMIT still has an essential role to play in that context. We therefore fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation that UNMIT's mandate be extended for another 12 months and that the Mission's current composition and strength be maintained. Nevertheless, appropriate adjustments to the mandate could be required in the future to gradually reflect the increasing ownership of the Timorese authorities and to strengthen the country's institutions.

We also believe that the local elections, scheduled to take place in the second half of this year, represent a crucial moment in the consolidation of the country's democratic institutions and in evaluating the success of the international strategy. We therefore support the Secretary-General's recommendation that UNMIT meet the Government's request for assistance.

The Timorese representative institutions, including the Parliament, are functioning well. Nevertheless, the performance of public administration continues to be hampered by a lack of human and financial resources. Through the years, the international community has provided important support for the empowerment and development of those democratic institutions. For its part, my country has contributed to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Timor-Leste and has renewed its support for the development of further UNDP programmes in 2009. My country is also including Timorese officers in specialized public management courses and programmes.

We appreciate the efforts of the Government in Dili to strengthen the judiciary sector through the allocation of greater financial resources and the creation of an anti-corruption commission, a court of auditors and a public services commission to oversee the management and recruitment of personnel.

Concerns persist, however, over the country's economic situation and its tackling of the plague of youth unemployment, which undermines social stability. It is also true that the weak economic performance is compounded by a limited capacity to attract foreign investment in areas other than the energy sector. To that end, we believe that greater resources from the international community should be directed towards infrastructure, which is needed to launch future development strategies in areas such as industry and agriculture.

Regional cooperation and the full inclusion of Timor-Leste in the ongoing integration of South-East Asia could help consolidate the country's institutions. Timor-Leste would benefit from regional mechanisms that would raise the Government's external and internal profiles. We look forward with interest to the possibility of Timor-Leste's joining the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and we hope that that goal can be achieved by 2012.

The President: I now call on the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): First of all, we would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. Portugal welcomes the opportunity to participate once again in the Council's deliberations. I extend to President José Ramos-Horta a very cordial and warm greeting. I thank him for his presence here today and for his laudable efforts for the cause of peace, reconciliation, democracy and development in Timor-Leste. We are very happy to see him fully recovered.

Portugal, naturally, concurs with the statement delivered by the presidency of the European Union. However, as a representative of a country that has had a shared history with Timor-Leste for nearly 500 years, I should like to raise some points in my national capacity.

Portugal praises the encouraging advances achieved over the past year in Timor-Leste. The leaders and the people of Timor-Leste have made remarkable progress in overcoming the most visible reminders of the 2006 crisis. The majority of the internally displaced persons have returned to their homes, the petitioners of the Falintil-Forças Armadas de Defesa Timor-Leste have been reintegrated into civilian life and the continuing stable security environment is a credit to Timor-Leste's determination to create conditions conducive to long-term peace, stability and development.

I wish to take this opportunity to commend Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, and all the staff of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste

(UNMIT) for their tireless work. UNMIT continues to play a critical role in assisting Timor-Leste, and we fully support a decision by the Council to extend its mandate for an additional period of 12 months at the Mission's current composition and strength.

Portugal recognizes the underlying challenges still to be met: poverty and unemployment, urban centres struggling with migration and the lack of an effective land and property regime, along with a judicial system that needs to be strengthened and security institutions requiring further capacity and training.

Dialogue is central to addressing those issues, as it is to ensuring unity of effort, if not broad consensus, in matters of national concern. Portugal is encouraged by the efforts of President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão in that regard and urges all major Timorese political groupings to pursue a constructive political dialogue, thus helping to meet the country's challenges.

Along with others, Portugal considers that long-term security and stability will depend on the capacity of the Timorese security institutions to function in an effective, responsible and accountable way, with due respect for the rule of law and benefiting from public confidence and support. Further efforts are needed to ensure a clear articulation of strategies and plans within and across State institutions. A clear vision of the relationship between the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste and the national police is crucial. Also, we share the view that additional steps should be taken to facilitate the coordination of the international community's support, including that of bilateral partners.

Portugal encourages the Government of Timor-Leste to continue working with UNMIT on the process of the resumption of police executive responsibilities. Portugal fully agrees with the recommendation contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2009/72) on the need for a continued robust UNMIT police presence across the country, both to support the handover of responsibilities and to help guarantee public security while that process is under way. We note that the challenges facing the police in Timor-Leste should not be underestimated and will take several years to address. The resumption of responsibilities by the national institution is only one step, albeit an important one, but also one that marks the beginning of a new phase for which the commitment of the Government and the support of the international community will prove essential.

Portugal also welcomes the Government's commitment to obtain an independent assessment of the needs of the judicial sector. We are ready to support, with other partners, all efforts to achieve national ownership of the entire rule of law system.

I would like to assure the Council that Portugal remains deeply engaged in supporting Timor-Leste in its efforts to consolidate democracy and development, both as a sister-country within the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and as a major development partner of my country in a number of significant areas.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Moreno Fernández (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by welcoming the presence at this meeting of His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste, whom we thank for the important statement he made this morning. We remember the successful visit to Cuba by President Ramos-Horta last year and in particular his statement during the General Assembly debate on 25 September 2008 (see A/63/PV.10), when he courageously and firmly requested the lifting of the inhumane and criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade which has been imposed on Cuba for over 50 years.

Although much remains to be done, Cuba welcomes the significant progress made in the security situation of Timor-Leste since the 2006 crisis. Likewise, the country showed its great ability to recover after the shock caused by the attacks of 11 February 2008. I also wish to welcome the fact that despite the seriousness of his injuries, today President Ramos-Horta is present among us and is well, active and optimistic.

The people and leaders of Timor-Leste have shown their strong will to continue the struggle to create favourable conditions for long-term peace, stability and development. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) has also played an important role in assisting Timor-Leste in various sectors.

Timor-Leste has stressed the need for UNMIT to continue to maintain a strong presence in the country.

Cuba believes that the wishes and interests expressed in that regard by the Government and the people of Timor-Leste should be duly taken into account by the Security Council.

In one opinion, in considering the situation in Timor-Leste not enough emphasis has yet been placed on the urgent attention required by the structural, economic and social problems affecting that sister nation, and on the need for greater support and assistance on the part of the international community. The eradication of poverty and underdevelopment is essential in order to guarantee the achievement of sustainable and durable peace and stability in Timor-Leste. There will be no stability without development, or development without stability.

The Government of Timor-Leste has adopted important measures to tackle poverty, unemployment and other pressing problems. The work carried out by President Ramos-Horta in that respect is commendable. Nonetheless, Timor-Leste will continue to require considerable support from the international community, in particular from the United Nations.

The current international financial and food crisis raises other important challenges. As a country which depends on the importation of basic food staples, Timor-Leste is affected by the sharp increase in the global price of foodstuffs such as rice. The challenges to be overcome by the Timorese people and Government in the coming years require considerable resources which greatly exceed the capacity of a State with limited resources. Furthermore, the international community has the moral obligation to help Timor-Leste train its human resources and create the infrastructure that is so greatly needed by that country, while continuing, of course, to fully respect its sovereignty.

Cuba, a small besieged country with limited resources, also continues its humble cooperation with Timor-Leste through various vital social development programmes which also play an important role in strengthening the country's internal stability. Cuba extends its cooperation in various sectors, principally in the area of health. Since 2003, 546 Cuban physicians and other health specialists have rendered service in that country and provided 3,477,000 Timorese citizens with health care. Cuban medical doctors have performed 25,564 surgeries, of which 6,396 were considered major surgery, and over 22,000 deliveries. They have administered more than 52,000 doses of vaccine. The lives of 12,418 people have been saved throughout the rugged terrain of Timor.

The Cuban medical brigade in Timor-Leste currently includes 233 physicians and other specialist personnel and is an example of selfless cooperation. Apart from providing basic and specialized health services in difficult conditions, the Cuban doctors also teach. Currently, 168 medical students from all districts of Timor are being trained in the medical school of the national university, and the medical professors are Cuban. Complementing those efforts, around 700 Timorese young people are studying in Cuba, free of charge, and most of them are studying medicine. This year, the first 19 medical students will return to Timor for their final year of internship; they will be directly involved in addressing the health problems of their respective communities. A total of 36 Cuban teachers advised the national literacy campaign in Timor-Leste, applying the Cuban literacy method called "Yes I Can", through which 17,400 citizens of that country have already learned to read and write.

If the international community, in particular some developed countries, responds to the appeal made by President Ramos-Horta and the Government of Timor-Leste to contribute $8 million, then after only two years the country will be able to declare itself free from the scourge of illiteracy. We believe that this would contribute significantly to internal peace and stability. What Cuba is doing today for Timor-Leste is just a modest example of how much could be achieved in that country through international cooperation and solidarity, in particular by States with greater economic and financial resources.

I would like to conclude by expressing, on behalf of the people and the Government of Cuba, our deepest gratitude to the people and the Government of Timor-Leste for the solidarity offered to our country in difficult moments, including their significant assistance in 2008 to repair the extensive damage caused in Cuba by hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The people of Timor-Leste can always count on the firm resolve of Cuba to continue strengthening its assistance to and solidarity with them. In this way, we fulfil our duty and honour a debt of gratitude to Timor-Leste and to other third-world peoples who have always expressed their firm and unwavering friendship and solidarity with Cuba.

The President: I call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): Mr. President, we thank you for allowing us to participate in today's open meeting and to share our views on the situation in Timor-Leste. We especially welcome the presence of the President of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, at today's debate. My delegation is also grateful to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2009/72) and for his participation in this meeting.

South Africa is pleased with the progress made by Timor-Leste since the 2006 crisis. Both the people and the political leadership of Timor-Leste have risen to overcome those events, and many strides have been made towards restoring normalcy and bringing sustainable peace and stability to their country. We particularly applaud the personal efforts of President Ramos-Horta in leading his nation throughout a period of uncertainty and enormous challenges.

South Africa notes with appreciation that the current report of the Secretary-General reflects many positive developments in Timor-Leste. On the political front, my delegation is encouraged by and supports ongoing efforts to foster dialogue and national reconciliation in Timor-Leste through various mechanisms, in particular the High-level Coordination Committee meetings, the Trilateral Coordination Forum and the good offices of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Khare.

We are also encouraged that some of the critical challenges noted during the Security Council visit to Timor-Leste last year were resolved in an amicable manner. In this regard, we welcome the approach taken by the Government of Timor-Leste in addressing the issues of the internally displaced persons and the petitioners.

South Africa underlines the continued importance of a comprehensive approach to security sector review and reform in Timor-Leste with a view to achieving the country's full national ownership of the sector. In this regard, we need to ensure a clear separation of internal and external security roles and responsibilities between the national police and the military. We are confident that the Government of Timor-Leste will enhance its efforts to that end.

We believe that the significant strides made thus far in Timor-Leste now require that its people, in partnership with the international community, focus on the economic development of Timor-Leste and help launch that nation on a path to sustainable and long-term development and security. There can be no security without development.

The international community must make a long-term commitment towards assisting the Government and people of Timor-Leste to achieve sustainable peace and prosperity. It is also crucial that bilateral and multilateral partners continue to assist the country to develop and strengthen its institutions and further build capacities in various sectors, in line with the country's national priorities. For its part, the leadership of Timor-Leste should continue to seize the opportunity of working with all segments of society in building national unity and reconciliation and in promoting human rights, justice and peace.

In conclusion, we wish to commend efforts made by the United Nations and, in particular, Special Representative Khare and the entire team of the United Nations Interim Mission in Timor-Leste for their invaluable work in Timor-Leste. We would also like to thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for your leadership on this issue in the Security Council.

Working with other partners, South Africa is ready to join the international community in assisting the people of Timor-Leste in their efforts to consolidate the progress made thus far. We are convinced that Timor-Leste can succeed only to the extent to which the international community can provide political support and much-needed resources for development.

The President: I would like to take this opportunity to thank South Africa for its leadership and hard work in the Security Council last year on the question of Timor-Leste.

I call on the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Punkrasin (Thailand): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

At the outset, ASEAN would like to congratulate Japan on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. We commend Japan for organizing an open debate on this important issue for our region. We would like to extend

our warm welcome to Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. We also commend the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Timor-Leste for their tireless dedication and hard work to support Timor-Leste.

ASEAN stands firmly in solidarity with the Government and people of Timor-Leste in their nation-building process and their admirable effort to achieve a stable, democratic and prosperous Timor-Leste. ASEAN's support for the United Nations in Timor-Leste has always been strong and consistent. Member States of ASEAN have contributed their troops and police observers to successive United Nations missions in Timor-Leste, including the current United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

ASEAN welcomes the remarkable progress achieved by the Government and people of Timor-Leste in overcoming various challenges to nation-building and commends the resilience that the country has shown in response to the events of 11 February 2008. We welcome the fact that the overall situation has returned to normalcy and that the security situation remains calm, while notable progress has been made to address the two major residual consequences of the 2006 crisis, namely, the issues of the petitioners and the internally displaced persons.

ASEAN believes that a holistic approach is important to ensure that Timor-Leste progresses smoothly from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and to durable peace, security and development. Peace, stability, development, the rule of law and good governance are all interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Therefore, ASEAN supports the holistic approach of UNMIT, as reflected in the four mandated priority areas — review and reform of the security sector; strengthening of the rule of law; economic and social development, particularly in the rural areas; and the promotion of a culture of democratic governance and dialogue.

ASEAN strongly believes that national ownership should not only continue to be a principle that guides every work of UNMIT, but also be the ultimate goal that the international community should strive to achieve.

ASEAN believes that, guided by strong leadership and assisted by international cooperation, Timor-Leste is moving forward and in the right direction. But many daunting challenges remain. Therefore, ASEAN strongly believes that substantial and sustained international partnership will continue to be vital to assisting Timor-Leste in building on past gains and laying a solid foundation for the future. Taking into account the express wish of the Government of Timor-Leste for a continued robust UNMIT presence, ASEAN is supportive of the Secretary-General's observation that an extension of the UNMIT mandate for a period of 12 months at the current composition and strength is essential.

While the international community should continue to be consistent in its support for the stability and security of Timor-Leste, ASEAN believes that concerted and sustained international assistance to support the socio-economic development of the country is no less significant. Investment in human capital and in the livelihood of the people, particularly at the community level, is an investment in the long-term peace, stability and prosperity of the country. In this regard, we are pleased that the Government of Timor-Leste and UNMIT recently signed the five-year United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2009-2013, which, in our view, constitutes a good framework for achieving national solidarity and development.

Development is always close to the heart of ASEAN because we know that development, peace and security are interlinked. So far, many ASEAN member States have been working with the Government of Timor-Leste on development and technical assistance programmes, in accordance with the needs and priorities of Timor-Leste in areas such as human resources development, capacity-building, poverty alleviation, employment generation, rural development, infrastructure development, agriculture, fisheries and public health.

In conclusion, ASEAN would like to reiterate our support for the work of the United Nations in Timor-Leste. ASEAN will continue to stand in solidarity and friendship with the Government and people of Timor-Leste, who are our friends and regional partner, in their nation-building effort and wishes them success in overcoming future challenges. ASEAN will continue to engage with Timor-Leste. We look forward to Timor-Leste's attendance at the 42nd ASEAN ministerial meeting as a guest of the Chair and its participation in the sixteenth ASEAN Regional Forum in Thailand later in 2009.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): First and foremost, Sir, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to thank you for organizing this open debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. I wish to also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing on the operation of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). Most importantly, I also wish to acknowledge and welcome the presence of Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and thank him for his statement and kind words with regard to Malaysia.

Malaysia associates itself with the statement just made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Nevertheless, we wish to make the following statement as a country and neighbour that would like nothing more than to see a peaceful and prosperous Timor-Leste.

Malaysia welcomes the progress achieved by Timor-Leste. The Secretary-General's report (S/2009/72) highlights the fact that the situation has returned to normalcy. What was a crisis has turned into an opportunity to solve the two major residual issues from the conflict of 2006 — those of petitioners and internally displaced persons (IDPs). To date, the petitioners have fully disbanded and been reintegrated into society, and 54 of the 63 IDP camps have closed.

We wish to congratulate the leaders and people of Timor-Leste, who, with the assistance of UNMIT and other international partners, have been successful in maintaining peace and stability in the country. This proves yet again that the Timorese are more than capable of reconciling whatever differences emerge for the sake of the peace and prosperity of their country.

The encouraging security situation augurs well for the planned resumption of policing responsibility by the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL). National ownership of policing responsibilities will represent a major milestone in the rehabilitation of the security sector in Timor-Leste and enable Timor-Leste to graduate from UNMIT soon. In spite of that positive development, Malaysia believes that the resumption process should be carefully implemented in a phased approach that emphasizes the need for PNTL units to meet the criteria mutually agreed to by the Government of Timor-Leste and UNMIT, in accordance with the related arrangements, as set out in paragraphs 21 and 22 of the Secretary-General's report. In that regard, we would like UNMIT and the international community to continue providing the necessary support so that Timor-Leste can take on the policing responsibility based on mutually agreed criteria and without imposing arbitrary deadlines.

As to the issue of security, we are of the view that it requires a holistic approach. In that regard, Malaysia welcomes UNMIT's medium-term strategy, which is focused on economic and social development and the promotion of a culture of democratic governance and dialogue, besides security sector reform and the strengthening of the rule of law. The introduction of benchmarks for the medium-term strategy is important. Benchmarks will facilitate measurement of the performance both of UNMIT and of the Government of Timor-Leste. That will enable adjustments to be made to the strength and mandate of UNMIT in due course.

While there is progress, stability remains fragile. The Secretary-General's report underlines several major root causes, such as poverty and unemployment, urban migration, the absence of an effective land and property regime, a weak judicial system and weak security institutions.

Consequently, Timor-Leste still requires the robust presence of UNMIT. In that regard, Malaysia supports Timor-Leste's expressed interest for the mandate of UNMIT to be further continued on a yearly basis. UNMIT's continued presence and support is critical, as it allows for proper traction in the reform of the security sector, especially with regard to reconstituting the PNTL, integrating the rule of law, implementing economic and social development and consolidating effective and sustainable democratic institutions and governance. We wish to reassure Timor-Leste of Malaysia's continued support and cooperation, be it bilateral or multilateral through UNMIT or other regional and international mechanisms.

Finally, Sir, Malaysia is happy to see you chairing the core group on Timor-Leste. We wish to also commend Mr. Atul Khare, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, and his team for the good work that they have accomplished for Timor-Leste.

The President: I invite Special Representative Khare to make a statement.

Mr. Khare: Let me begin, Sir, by thanking you and the Member States for the very kind words directed towards myself and my Mission. I was particularly touched by the reference made by President José Ramos-Horta to the survey conducted by the International Republican Institute, which showed a 75 per cent popularity rating for my Mission.

Since, in his usual humble fashion, the President did not mention his own popularity rating, kindly allow me to mention that he enjoys the highest popularity rating of that survey — 82 per cent. The rating is highly deserved and, in my mind, somewhat reflects his devoted, constant and tireless efforts to bring peace, prosperity and stability to his country.

I should also like, Sir, to thank you and the Council for its constant support for the work of my Mission and the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General for their constant guidance, advice and encouragement, which has made our achievements possible. I would also like to thank all Member States for their support for the Mission's extension for one year at the current composition and strength.

Many speakers reflected on the need to define a meaningful role for the Armed Forces of Timor-Leste in a peace-time setting and to separate very clearly the responsibilities for policing from those of the military and, indeed, internal security from external defence. They also recognized a very strong need to enhance the mechanisms of internal accountability and civilian oversight over both security forces.

I am very pleased to inform Council members that those issues are at the forefront of the thinking of the Timorese leadership, which is committed to those developments. While some will be achieved through a process of security sector review and reform, essentially led by the Timorese authorities and supported by the United Nations, substantial bilateral assistance will be required for the development of proper military doctrines. I would particularly like to mention the bilateral cooperation being provided by Australia, Brazil, Portugal, New Zealand and the United States of America through its Pacific Command, which has been extremely useful in helping the Timorese authorities to achieve the goals of defining, as I said, a meaningful role for their army in a peace-time setting.

Several speakers referred to the forthcoming resumption of policing responsibilities by the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste. This resumption would be gradual; it would follow a phased approach. In my view, depending on progress, it would take several months or maybe up to a year. Thus, some time during the last quarter of this year — 2009 — depending on progress, my Mission will make a mid-term assessment of the success of the resumption process to that point. And, with the help of a technical assessment mission from Headquarters, we will recommend benchmarks for possible adjustments in the numbers of UNMIT police — which also should be carried out in a gradual, step-by-step fashion, without endangering continued stability. That recommendation could be included, perhaps, with the approval of the Secretary-General, in the next report of the Secretary-General, to be issued in February 2010.

At this stage I should like to recall that the record of my Mission in releasing assets that are no longer required speaks for itself. For example, immediately after the constitution of the new Government in August 2007, following the 2007 elections, we ensured that the additional 140 police officers that the Security Council provided for security during the electoral period through its resolution 1745 (2007) were immediately released, along with nearly 400 electoral officers. So, we are very happy to release assets at the first possible moment when they are no longer required; but currently I believe that, at this stage when we are just commencing the resumption process, the present strength of international police must be maintained for a period of a full year, until February 2010.

On the reform of the justice sector, and on the need for an independent comprehensive needs assessment — and, of course, on strengthening the justice sector to provide greater accountability and to combat any perception of impunity — I would like to report that at the last meeting of the Committee on High-level Coordination, chaired by His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta on 29 January, a decision was taken to quickly conduct an independent comprehensive needs assessment. I trust that within the next 12 to 18 weeks this independent comprehensive needs assessment should become a reality and should thereafter permit the international community to plan its assistance to the justice sector.

Some speakers raised the issue of the need to fight domestic violence and the need to fight and curb any limited trafficking in persons that might be taking place. I want to put on record my deepest appreciation

to His Excellency the President, who in fact in March last year, on International Women's Day — from his hospital bed, at a time when he was still recovering — issued a public message to the people of Timor-Leste to combat these evils. And more recently, on 3 February, he released the latest report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the status of women and committed himself and his country to fighting the social evils of domestic violence and gender-based violence.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the efforts of Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão in promoting gender-responsive budgeting in the latest budget and in appointing gender focal points in all ministries to ensure that the work of those ministries is as attuned as possible to these concerns of women and development.

Since I have already taken more than five minutes of the Council's time, allow me to conclude by thanking the international security forces and their contributors, Australia and New Zealand; all the members of the United Nations country team and, indeed, of the wider United Nations family, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; and, in particular, the two Deputy Special Representatives, Mr. Finn Reske-Nielsen and Mr. Takahisa Kawakami, who are really my right and left hands and who are pillars of great strength in my efforts to assist the Timorese leaders and their people.

The President: I thank Mr. Khare for his statement.

On this occasion I must say that the fact that so many speakers, from five regions of the world, took the floor in this open debate on Timor-Leste is a manifestation of strong interest and support by all Member States regarding the future, the democracy and the stability of Timor-Leste. It seems that unanimous strong support was expressed for the continued presence of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and for an extension of its mandate, as well as for the continued prosperity of Timor-Leste.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my colleagues in the Council, to convey the deepest possible appreciation to His Excellency President José Ramos-Horta and his delegation for taking the trouble to come to New York to attend this open debate on the occasion of an extension of the mandate. I wish the President good health and future success in his country. I also express great appreciation to Deputy Secretary-General Migiro for her patience and for staying with the Council to show her solidarity with us.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.